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XLR8R

88
JUNE/JULY
2005

ACCELERATING MUSIC AND CULTURE



Four Tet & Caribou

Plug In, Turn On, Freak Out

Congolese Trance WK Interact's Secret Weapon Jean Grae on Justin Timberlake



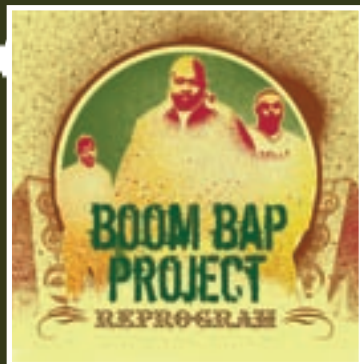
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IN STORES 6.21.05



I SELF DEVINE
SELF DESTRUCTION

I Self Devine, Micranots front-man and one half of Semi.Official returns with his debut solo album, *Self Destruction*. With production by Jake One, Vitamin D, Bean One & Ant, *Self Destruction* is I Self's most personal and engaging journey to date.

IN STORES 8.02.05





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Photo of Isolée by Bernd Westphal

WANTED

Rare and Unreleased Tracks From the Pages of XLR8R Magazine

Volume 3: Hip-Hop



The third in a series of hard-to-find tracks debuting in digital form, featuring Aceyalone, O.D.B., Oh No, Mathematics, Medaphor, Foreign Exchange, Paris, Ohmega Watts, Zeph & Azeem, Rob Sonic, One Be Lo, and more. Available exclusively through the iTunes Music Store. Original artwork by Nick Philip. www.itunes.com



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"Contradiction" by **Camille Rose Garcia**

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ED'S RANT LIVE AND DIRECT



Jamie Lidell performing live
April 19, 2005 at The Metro in
London (David Bowen)

Summer's here, and that means festival season. Time to stock up on the Handi-Wipes and the hangover remedies and, for the sensible folk, sun-block and earplugs. (Can someone tell me why don't they sell earplugs at every big event? Some of us need those a lot more than pro-marijuana stickers and glowsticks.) Time to stick those pasty arms in a tank top and career around a beach, desert, grass-covered mega-field, or dusty arena, trying to see 10 of your favorite artists play in one day.

It's also the time to see what electronic music has to offer in the way of live performance. Many have speculated that the future of the genre will depend on how well music that's usually made solo—on a laptop or in a darkened studio—can hold up when it's put on a stage. Sure, producers can DJ and dance clubs will probably never die, but the days of \$30 massive raves are fading quickly, and people paying \$10 or \$15 to see their favorite electronic musician live want to see a show, not just someone who appears to be checking email (as Jamie Lidell rails against on page 54).

Speaking of Lidell, his live show was the original inspiration for this issue. Whereas his new album, *Multiply*—a bizarre homage to the golden years of American R&B—is destined to cause love/hate reactions from the techno community, everyone seems to agree that his live performance is amazing. We caught him at Amsterdam club Paradiso back in October, and the rumors that frequent *XLR8R* correspondent Philip Sherburne was feeding in our ears rang true. In a crazy costume that appeared to be made out of reel-to-reel tape loops, he proceeded to beatbox, sing gospel, and create beats on the spot; even the technical difficulties just seemed to be another part of the enthralling show.

As we conceived an issue devoted to electronic music performed live, it seemed only natural to talk to friends Four Tet and Caribou. Despite sharing melodic sensibilities and tempos, the two couldn't have more different live shows—Four Tet goes a traditional laptop route, while Caribou pursues an indie rock-esque direction. Writer Tony Ware sat down with them to figure out the method behind the madness, and Tony, myself, Domino Records' Kris Chen, and photographer Chris Glancy also had the pleasure of following the pair, dressed like runaways from the *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* spelunking club, around the East Village.

Elsewhere embedded in this issue are future jazz boundary-pushers Bugz in the Attic, all nine of whom shred parties to bits when they get behind the decks, plus Congolese troupe Konono No. 1 (who purvey a different kind of electro-rock) and Frankfurt's Isolée, whose recent decks 'n' effects show at APT was one of the best spins I've ever heard on the minimal tech-house sound.

If you're heading out to Sonar, Mutek, Siren, Numusic, All Tomorrow's Parties, or any of the other great festivals, try to check out these artists for yourself. And don't hesitate to write us about any other acts that blow your mind along the way. No matter how much Sparks we drink, we can't be everywhere at once (but it's not for lack of trying). And while you're at it, check our website (www.xlr8r.com), where you'll find archived material, plus extras from every issue.

—Vivian Host, Editor

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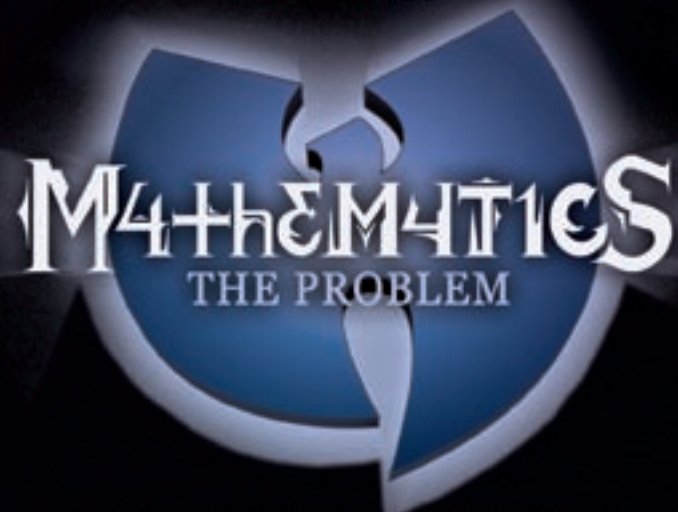


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ANNA BALKRISHNA

In addition to freelance writing, Anna Balkrishna handles tours and publicity for the super-cool Kronos Quartet and likes to hang out with the slack-jawed gear junkies of San Francisco's BFamily Records crew. She would like you to know that the best deal in the city is the 99¢ ice cream cone from the counter at Rite Aid on the corner of Market and Van Ness. Anna warns that punks better eat that shit quick: after 90 seconds, that melting scoop of chocolate malted crunch will ooze right off your cone and no amount of tears will bring it back.



TONY WARE

Tony Ware is a pro observationalist and amateur conversationalist based in Atlanta, GA. When not cataloguing imaginary memories, secret hide-outs, and stomping grounds, this Rivers Cuomo impersonator contributes to *XLR8R*, *URB*, *Remix*, *Magnet*, Air Tran's *GO!* inflight magazine, as well as a half-dozen alternative weeklies around the country. His day job is nightlife, and his nightlife is long daze. In his spare time he enjoys Trappist ale, manages the New Hotness, reads blargs, and dreams of the adventures of a swash-buckling kitten named Picklefeathers.



DAVID BOWEN

David Bowen is based in Nottingham, England. He began black and white photographic printing in his teens and has been shooting festivals, parties, and musicians since the mid-'90s. His work has appeared in *Urb*, *DJ*, *XLR8R*, *Lonely Planet* guides, *Time Out*, and broadsheet newspapers in the UK, and has been exhibited in London and Nottingham. His favorite music festivals are Numusic (Norway), Bestival (UK), and Sonar (Spain), and today he is listening mostly to Jamie Lidell, Four Tet, Isan, and Xploding Plastix.



JONATHAN ZWICKEL

What could be more self-absorbed than the writer's bio? It is, in fact, pure journalistic masturbation—even as it feels so, so good, it's inevitably shameful. Jonathan Zwickel just wants to get this over with as quick as possible before someone walks in on him. When not driving a semi or bumming in Lake Tahoe, Jonathan lives and loves in Fort Lauderdale, where he's the music editor of the *New Times Broward-Palm Beach*. He would like to give a shout out to his mom, without whom none of this would be possible.

Meet Melissa.

Melissa won an unofficial wet T-shirt contest held at the American Apparel apartment in Montreal. Her prize for winning was a travel mug from McGill University, and the satisfaction of a job well done.

She is wearing our new ultralight Sheer Jersey T-Shirt, AKA "The Summer Shirt," available at our stores.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to letters@xlr8r.com or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.

barometer of drum & bass's vigor. Yes, this album plays like a *NOW 2005* compilation of jungle. What about the exceptional tunes you pointed out in your review ("Drop it Down" and "Uprising")? DJ Fresh is not pushing the envelope of drum & bass with *Bass Invaderz*, agreed. However, people like Calibre, Artificial Intelligence, John B, and especially Klute are stretching the boundaries of drum & bass. Put in Klute's *No One's Listening Anymore* and tell me if d&b is on that so-called precipice. Keep up the good work!

Joshua

Copywrite Protection

In the April issue, I was disappointed to see such a harsh review of the new Copywrite CD. He states on the back cover that the project is merely a mixtape. Although I think that too many artists use "mixtape" as a cop-out for releasing mediocre material, projects like *Cruise Control* are necessary for indie emcees to remain in the public eye, which doesn't have the patience to wait for only thorough, perfect albums.

Also, Copy has never claimed to be more than what he is, a shit-talking MC (which he's quite possibly the best at). We can't always hate on something just because it isn't "forward-thinking" or whatever. Edan said in the very same issue that elements focused on hip-hop's past are just as important as

those directed toward the future, and straight up battling is part of that history.

Respects,

Dom Pinelli, *Good Eye Studios, Philly*

Bigoted Bastard

I recently became aware of a small bit on Scientology in the "Bitter Bastard" column of the November issue (#82). While I understand that this column is meant to be humorous and the author is intentionally caustic, I am concerned with the forwarding of a bigoted stereotype. Scientology is a worldwide church with more than eight million members, many of whom are as successful in their own fields as Tom Cruise is in his. This is certainly not a "cult." I am sure your magazine is sensitive to racial and sexual slurs; I am asking you to add religious slurs to the list.

Jeff Quiros, *Church of Scientology of San Francisco*

CORRECTIONS (ISSUE 86): In our feature review of Montag's *Alone, Not Alone* we incorrectly stated that the band's name is pronounced "mahn-taj"; it is actually "mon-tag." Performer Amy Millan's name was misspelled, and James Cargill from Broadcast plays on *Alone, Not Alone*, not Francis Amireault. We also said that Maya Hayuk "recently curated her first gallery show, *Alone in This Together*." The traveling show (which ran at Transport Gallery in November 2004 under the name *By The People For The People*) is the sixth show Hayuk has curated since 1998; for a list of the others, visit www.mayahayuk.com.

D&B Is Not Dead!

This message is in response to Jenn Marston's review of DJ Fresh's new album *Bass Invaderz*. Although I agree with your analysis of DJ Fresh's newest compilation, I disagree with your theory that drum & bass is on its last legs. As you so eloquently stated in your article, "the proliferation of jungle labels, club nights, and message boards is proof the genre is still breathing," or some might say flourishing. I think your theory is flawed because you are focusing on the wrong person. You are using DJ Fresh and his compilation as a

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BITTER BASTARD'S TOP 10 WORST THINGS ABOUT FESTIVALS



7



5



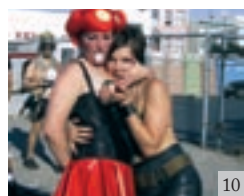
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4

I rolled in the mud at Woodstock in 1996 and air-guitarred to the Rolling Stones at Altamont. I was off my trolley when Underworld played at Glastonbury in 1998. I lost my shit to Björk at Sonár in 2003, and was a slave to Richie Hawtin's rhythms at MUTEK in 2004. I, BJ "Bitter" Bastard, was there. But between hobnobbing with the stars, taunting friends with my backstage passes, and gurning like a loon, I also had to deal with the ugly side of the festival scene. Oh, there were catfights backstage and the VIP bar ran out of vodka...and who could forget the horrible sight of Cameron Diaz's sandal-clad feet? Yet, nothing can compare to the 10 things below, which will be unfortunate staples of the festival circuit until the end of time.

1. Bad tattoos Nothing convinces you to not get "body art" like going to a big concert. It's not like the '70s when people had unicorns and dragons and Motorhead logos; nowadays, it's all about sick and extreme tattoos—like having P.L.U.R. written in balloons above the words "Canoe Girl." (p.s. Canoe Girl is the worst rave name ever.)

2. Huge screen videos Sometimes these are cool—like when you're trying to see what the cute keyboard player from E.M.F. looks like but you're two football lengths away from the stage—but then an aging rock god (in this photo, New Order's Bernard Sumner) comes on and

you can see every nuance of his pained, constipated expression in high resolution. It's depressing.

3. Dude, where's my car? Unless you have a compass, a GPS locator, or a bloodhound with you, you will lose your car in the parking lot.

4. "Interactive" performance art No, see...the point of concerts is to *hear* bands, not to spend five hours drumming on some giant *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* shit. I mean, are these people trying to be "discovered" or something? Shit, if you were that talented in drumming on metal objects you would already be touring with Einstürzende Neubauten, or maybe the cast of *Stomp*. Now quit it.

5. Faerie elves Sometimes pretty girls get it into their heads that they can do anything they want, including dressing like faerie elves. Some common signs of this crippling disease are Renaissance Faire flower crowns, velvet pouches containing magical crystals, and an abundance of scarves and crushed velvet. This particular sprite was dancing around like a *beaaaaannuuutifull* butterfly and when we tried to take her picture she immediately struck this yoga pose, as if trying to do everything mystical all at once.

6. Babies It's not cool to bring your baby to a festival, even if she is Bloc Party's biggest fan.

7. Silly hats This guy was explaining to us and another woman (who seemed completely enthralled, by the way) about how much work went into making his hat. Not only did he have to save all the corks and wash them, he had to consider the "safety of his face" when placing them on the hat. Hey, some people read books and do stuff so people will think they're interesting...and some people spend their time making cork hats.

8. The food court The food area is always so distracting with all the crazy lights and the steaming tables and the mouthwatering photos. This will compel you to think that you can eat chow mein, garlic fries, a vegan "papaya burger," and two funnel cakes and still feel okay. You will, of course, be wrong.

9. Port-a-potties Oh, the humanity! No matter how long you try to hold out, you will inevitably need to visit the port-a-loos. (You may want to think about this before downing those five thirst-quenching beers or that portion of chicken tikka masala.) The experience is inevitably a test of your balance and agility as you try to excrete nature's finest maneuver without touching any body part to any surface.

10. Scary people At certain festivals, there are lots of people on drugs and it's not nice to mess with their heads by dressing up like some bad daydream. There are lots of ways this manifests itself, including people who dress up like mascots or animals, people in scary wigs, men in short skirts, and chicks whose life dream is to be in the *Girls Gone Wild* video series and dudes in ancient Egyptian bondage costumes.

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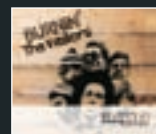
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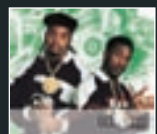


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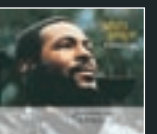
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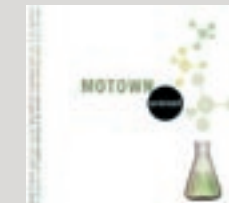
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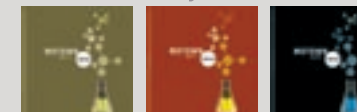


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SILHOUETTE BROWN

THE GENTLE SIDE OF WEST LONDON PUTS BRUK HEADS IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD.

WORDS: EMMERALD GREENE PHOTO: DAVID BOWEN

“This West London ‘broken’ tag has gotten out of hand,” quips Dennis “Dego” MacFarlane about how his and Silhouette Brown co-producer Kaidi Tatham’s sound is described in the media. “We’ve dropped *many* different styles of music.”

But anyone paying attention to West London’s music scene over the past seven or eight years knows that MacFarlane and Tatham have made broken beat—a groundbreaking amalgamation of soul, dance, jazz-funk, and boogie—their own. Tatham, an accomplished keyboardist (whom some have compared to Herbie Hancock), and rhythm master MacFarlane are two of the most innovative producers on either side of the Atlantic. Their latest album venture—a lush downtempo vocal soul project—represents a departure from the driving syncopated rhythms of their work as Agent K (Tatham) and DKD (with Daz-I-Kue).

“The idea behind *Silhouette Brown* was to do an LP around one voice and style,” says MacFarlane. That voice belongs to Deborah Jordan, a relative newcomer not already entrenched in the West London scene.

Jordan—a classically trained flutist, Patrice Rushen and Frank Zappa fan, and qualified Reiki practitioner—exudes enthusiasm and an infectious zeal for life. She began focusing on her singing during a lengthy recovery from a near-fatal accident in which she was hit by a taxi while walking. She currently works as a backing vocalist for Eska and Bembe Segue, as well as being co-writer and featured vocalist on *Silhouette Brown*. For the latter, Jordan’s natural vocals and harmonizing prowess add a touch of delicacy to Tatham and MacFarlane’s beats, throwing a welcome glitch into the broken beat matrix.

“Everyone expected *Silhouette Brown* to be a broken beat thing like DKD. Then they heard it and found that it wasn’t like DKD at all,” Jordan says with a delighted chuckle. “It’s really good to be a part of something that’s broken the mold and that people weren’t expecting.”

Silhouette Brown is out now on Ether Records. www.ethermusic.net

Silhouette Brown’s Deborah Jordan



LES GEORGES LENINGRAD

MONTREAL PERFORMANCE ART PUNKS
FIND INSANITY TO BE THE ONLY LOGICAL CHOICE.

WORDS: ALEX POSELL IMAGE: DOMINIQUE PÉTRIN

"We have to do it. We have no choice but to make things move," declares Les Georges Leningrad's Poney P of the trio's dance-inducing live shows, where band members explode in wild expressions of childlike spirit.

At first glance, one might mistake LGL for some sort of electroclash hack routine, but the truth is anything but; whereas electro is primarily a retro movement, Les Georges' pastiche moves right past the modern age into postmodern, Dionysian playfulness. Formed in 1999, the art-synth-noise band released *Deux Hot Dogs Moutarde Chou* (Alien8) in 2003, a cathartic denial of the culture of micro-management, a chaotic release of primitive abandon.

By contrast, *Sur Les Traces de Black Eskimo* (Alien8) is funkier and more danceable, moving from NIN-style grind into psychotic jazz interludes, drum & bass fury, and washing machine beats. The appearance of structured rhythms, however, was motivated more by youthful exuberance than by any attempt to impose "order" upon their music.

The threesome of Poney P, Bobo, and Mingo L'Indien has become famous for their frenzied live show—fronted by Poney's murderous wail and framed by a series of makeshift paper masks, the music is played with an apocalyptic desperation. It feels like Les Georges frantically *need* to transmit their message...if there is one. Their genius lies not in what they are telling you, but in what is buried beneath the madness—the idea that "civilized" behavior is itself quite absurd, therefore lunacy is the only reasonable choice. Poney puts it succinctly: "We are No Feminist, No Racist, No Vegan, No Pagan, No Politics, No Polite. We have no great ideas. We are no revolutionaries. We stand for the revenge of the small animals only."

Far from being empty, however, Les Georges find the world almost overburdened with meaning. "Everything is important," says Poney cryptically. "I can't think of what would be the least important thing on earth because I have too many important things to think about." Like the whirlwind brain-storm of a genuine schizophrenic, their apparent incoherence is in fact an explosion of thought; accelerated ideas emerge in such rapid-fire succession that the linear mind cannot keep up. To make sense of the deluge, one must allow for the quantum leap of intuition...or risk getting lost in the storm. Meanwhile, the mindfuck known as Les Georges Leningrad will continue to steamroll its way from town to town, laughing all the while. Breaking down walls? Les Georges never even knew they were there.

Look out for LGL's new single "Supa Dupa" featuring remixes from Akufen and Magas on Troubleman Unlimited.
www.lesgeorgesleningrad.org, www.alien8recordings.com

SKELTONS & THE GIRL-FACED BOYS

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Ghostly debut of Shinkoyo's Ohio-bred kings of out-pop; an amalgam of dissonant funk and eccentric rock based on homemade instruments and walls of keyboards.

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"Magnificent...the kind of thing you could have stuck in your head for days, nudged into your memory by chiming keys and brisk programming." - *Pitchforkmedia* (praise for their previous release *Life and the Afterbirth*)

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GRAPHIC BEHAVIOR

Pizza and Bic pen drawings rule Graphic Havoc's art universe.

Ghava. It looks like guava, or maybe something gangsta, but it really stands for Graphic Havoc Avisualagency, who recently celebrated 10 years of visual mayhem with the design book *Gh* (hardcover; \$45, Abrams Books/Booth-Clibborn Editions). The book collects a variety of work—heady illustrations, photographs, typography, and conceptual pieces—from this five-member collective, who've worked with Nike and 2K T-shirts, designed record covers for Hefty and Warp, and beautified the pages of *Arkitip* and *Mass Appeal* since first banding together in Atlanta in 1994.

These days, Graphic Havoc operates out of New York and Los Angeles, and the two offices worked together to gussy up this month's Four Tet and Caribou cover photo. With so much magic flowing through their 50 fingertips, we thought we'd ask them a few probing questions. *Tyra Bangs*

www.ghava.com

What's one piece of art that you think is utterly amazing?

David Merten: Right now, it's the BBC version of *The Office*. It's brilliantly funny and heartbreaking at the same time. The amount of dedication everyone has to their characters is almost disturbing. It should be looked at as much more than



just a comedy show.

Peter Rentz: [Japanese videogame] *Katamari Damacy*
Randall J. Lane: Jean Ritchie's *Ballads from Her Appalachian Family Tradition* album

Derek Lerner: Lombardi's Pizza. Who said there is not art to making a pizza?

Sadek Bazarra: [American video artist] Bill Viola's *Five Angels for the Millennium*

What's one thing you would have liked to put in the book but didn't get to?

David Merten: I wish we could have included a check for 50 million dollars made out to us.

Peter Rentz: A bunch of Bic pen drawings I did right after the book came out.

Derek Lerner: A DVD of our motion work

Any advice for up-and-coming visual artists?

Randall J. Lane: Believe in what you're doing and do it.

Sadek Bazarra: Keep at it and don't get discouraged—it usually takes years to develop and refine your style(s).



IDJUT BOYS

THIS CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES PROVES ITS SMARTS WITH A WICKED NEW COMPILATION.
WORDS: ANNA BALKRISHNA PHOTO: TIM & BARRY

Chatting with the Idjut Boys from their studio in London borough Hackney, it doesn't take long to see what kind of minds are at work. Explaining the title of their recent 12" "Scorejazi," a dubby bit of sitar-laced weirdness on their Cottage imprint, the duo cheerfully states, "Scorejazi" means to fart, pass wind, anal belch, etcetera in Italian."

"We were playing at a club called Echoes in Rimini, Italy," elaborates Dan Tyler. "The guy who was driving us was a fine fellow called Donato, and it was he who gave up this piece of Italian in our attempts to learn the finer points of his most pleasant language."

Ah yes. Since Dan Tyler and Conrad McDonnell first hooked up in the early '90s, much has been made of the Idjut Boys' mischievous side—from their ridiculously named productions (look no further than their 1999 full-length *Life: The Shoeing You Deserve* for such gems as "Dog Shit" and "Mutton Chops") to their predilection for tossing Ann Margaret records into their DJ sets.

As DJs, the Idjuts follow the old-school "anything goes" aesthetic of compadres Francois Kevorkian and DJ Harvey, incorporating house, '70s disco, '80s electro, samba, and old funk into sprawling 10-hour sets. While stepping only infrequently into kitsch (and that's just for fun), Tyler and McDonnell understand how a well-situated slap bass, handclap, acid tweak, or 808 cowbell can both wink at history and update it.

Nowhere is this more evident than on the Idjut Boys' *Press Play* compilation, their first album in four years. On the release, re-edits of vintage Italo-disco mainstays from Tantra and Harry Thuman share equal footing with brand new electric boogies by the likes of digital vixen Mu and funk newcomers Plantlife. The best part: it's often near impossible to tell which tunes are "classic" and which were pressed just months ago.

Though their reverence for the dancefloors of yore has earned them a reputation as disco revivalists, the boys insist that they simply appreciate booty-shaking music, regardless of the era that produced it. "Disco's just real music," says Tyler. "Disco means all kinds of music to us: rock, pop, whatever. A good record stands the test of time. You can play records that are 25 years ancient and they still sound so fresh that they're mistaken for new records. What else can we say, apart from that all music is good?"

Idjut Boys' *Press Play* is out now on Tirk Records. www.nuphonic.co.uk



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DVD ROUND-UP: BLACK MAGIC

Hip-hop, reggae, and Afrobeat masters are revealed with the DVD release of three classic music movies.



1. Fela Kuti from *Music is the Weapon*; 2. Jacob Miller from *Rockers*; 3. Public Enemy live performance from *It Takes a Nation*

BOMBING BRITAIN

In 1987, Public Enemy was on its way to becoming the most important hip-hop group on the planet. *It Takes a Nation—The First London Invasion Tour 1987* (Slam Media, \$16.95) depicts PE's ascendance through footage from their first UK invasion. PE commandeered the cavernous Hammersmith Odeon for a three-day run in early November, pounding out highlight tracks from *Yo! Bum Rush the Show* and the upcoming *Nation of Millions* with astounding power and laser-guided focus. Candid press conference footage shows Chuck D at his most polemic and reveals a mostly sober Flavor Flav. Not surprisingly, Flav is a magnet for the camera, but along with Terminator X, Professor Griff, and the S1W, the entire group brings the noise that would soon be heard around the world. *Jonathan Zwickel*
www.slamjamz.com

RASTA REDUX

The acting in *Rockers: 25th Anniversary Edition* (Music Video Distributors, \$14.95) might give the impression the cast did a few extra takes of the smoking scenes—then again, this colorful and righteous reggae revenge story doesn't aim for high drama. Shot in Jamaica, *Rockers* showcases the real sights and sounds of the island, swimming in slang so thick the film is subtitled. The exceptional soundtrack and scores of cameos by reggae legends are only enhanced by the anniversary edition's DVD extras, including an interactive slang gallery and music videos. All in all, this is a tightly packed reggae joint. *Patrick Sisson*
mvd2b.com

THE ARMAMENT OF AFRICA

The reason Nigerian Afrobeat star Fela Kuti never hit it big in America during his lifetime is because once he recorded a song he never again performed it live. But eight years after his death, Kuti's legacy is global. For those just tuning in, *Music is the Weapon* (Wrasse, \$34.98) follows Kuti and crew from their Kalkuta Republic compound to The Shrine, the club where he honed his sound. Interspersing candid backstage interviews with phenomenal live footage—and taking a documentary-style approach to Kuti's courageous politics and feminine passions (he married 27 women in one ceremony)—*Music* is Lagos unrestricted, bare and pure. Packaged with a two-CD set of his hits, this trilogy is a weapon in itself. *Derek Beres*
www.wrasserecords.com

Produced by Marvelous Entertainment. Animation Produced by Madhouse Studios (The Animatrix: Program & World Record, Cibola). Vampire Hunter D) www.gunslingergirl.tv

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FAT FREDDY'S DROP

NEW ZEALAND'S BEST-KEPT SECRET IS THE TROPICAL DOWNTempo SEPTET KNOWN AS FFD.

WORDS: MIKE BATTAGLIA PHOTO: AMELIA HANDSCOMB

Thank Matt Chicoine. If he hadn't moved to New Zealand a few years ago, the world may never have caught on to Wellington's best-kept secret: the reggae/electro/jazz outfit Fat Freddy's Drop. Chicoine—known widely as Detroit's Reeloose—took a few of the group's self-released 12-inches along with him on a global DJ tour. Those vinyl goodies fell into the hands of Daniel Best (of the Sonar Kollektiv-affiliated Best Seven label), who quickly released "Midnight Marauders," a sublime vocal jam for the wee hours by FFD's core producer Chris Faiumu (a.k.a. DJ Fitchie) and butter-throated singer/cartoonist Dallas Tamaira (a.k.a. Joe Dukie).

Dukie & Fitchie studio-based projects are a condensed version of the free-flowing yet ultra tight Drop, whose seven members add guitar, keys, and a three-piece horn section to the mix while Faiumu brings the beats, bass, and FX via an Akai MPC. The rest of the world will be able to experience the joy for themselves as FFD releases their debut long-player, *Based on a True Story* (Kartel). The album contains the choice cut "Flashback," which is an apt illustration of Fat Freddy's musical hop-scotching and varied influences. The track starts off with a slow skanking reggae beat, which briefly breaks down into free jazz before suddenly taking a left turn into bouncing electro beats; all the while, Dallas cryptically intones "Breathe easy, lovers."

"Fat Freddy's Drop was always this little thing on the side where we'd go down to the club and have a jam, put the fun back into what we're doing and not take it too seriously," explains Faiumu, the group's extra-large Samoan figurehead. "It grew from a real improvised ethos and we try as much as we can to try and keep [that] part of the live set, 'cause when we're getting excited on stage it translates to the audience."

That excitement was palpable at the 2004 Movement Festival in Detroit—FFD played their first blazing American set to sun-and-beat-drenched techno heads who ate up the group's lazy grooves. "That's one of our favorite things...being thrown into an environment where no one knows who we are," says Faiumu. "As long as we've got two hours, we've usually won people over by the end of the set."

www.fatfreddysdrop.com



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DEFINING THE INDUSTRY STANDARD



FIELD DAY

XLR8R takes to the desert for Coachella 2005.

Swathed in strips of black linen and looking like a vampire bat, Peter Murphy descended from the ceiling to sing the chilling classic “Bela Lugosi’s Dead” upside down. Gang of Four showed younger bands like Bloc Party and The Secret Machines how dance punk is done; Kasabian and The Bravery ripped through flashy sets of retro rock; and The Prodigy and The Chemical Brothers proved rave is not dead, packing a heaving tent with stadium-ready techno and retina-detonating visuals.

Attendees at the sixth installment of the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival (April 30-May 1) were treated to the usual line-up of indie rock, electronic, and leftfield hip-hop performances, plus the unex-

pected addition of world music acts (Café Tacuba, Zap Mama) and noise bands (The Locust, Wolf Eyes). Though some bands couldn’t weather daytime slots, M.I.A., The Faint, The Arcade Fire, and Aesop Rock were among the electrifying performances.

Despite attracting more of a mainstream audience these days, Coachella still vibrates with the kinetic energy of its talent. The only complaint about this well-organized event is its “art”—it consists of tired, Burning Man-style techno-apocalyptic performances that hardly complement the cutting-edge music policy. *Vivian Host; Photos by Vivian Host & Brianna Pope*

www.coachella.com



1. Yan and Hamilton from British Sea Power; 2. Tegan and Sara; 3. Joey Karam from The Locust; 4. K-Os; 5. Sage Francis; 6. Jean Grae



XLR8R INTERROGATION TEAM

What will you be listening to this summer?

Who are you most excited to see at Coachella?

What’s your favorite summer accessory?

Any funny celebrity sightings at Coachella?

What do you wish they had put in your artist trailer?

What song reminds you of summer?

BRITISH SEA POWER

Yan: Gypsy folk.
Hamilton: Blues.

Yan: M.I.A....and I just saw The Arcade Fire and I think they stole our keyboardist Eamon’s moves.

Yan: A bus conductor’s medallion for 10 years of safe conducting. Hamilton: A nice bit of rain.

Yan: Chloë Sevigny, she was checking us out. Hamilton: I don’t know about that.

Yan: A fox cub and a masseuse. Hamilton: A sheep.

Hamilton: Jonathan Richman’s “That Summer Feeling.” Yan: Pavement’s “Summer Babe.”

TEGAN & SARA

Sara: Antony & The Johnsons’s new record and the new album by Spoon.

Tegan: Fiery Furnaces, The Arcade Fire, Blood Brothers, and M.I.A.

Tegan: I hate summer...maybe a margarita. Sara: My little wee socks.

Tegan: I saw Bijou Phillips dancing on top of a cylinder block with the guy from *That ’70s Show* and Casey Affleck watching. I think they’re like a little posse.

Tegan: I wish I had *seen* my trailer. I have never been so busy.

Sara: Anything by Smashing Pumpkins. It reminds me of high school

THE LOCUST

Fantômas and The Bad Seeds.

Fantômas—I was on the road with them all last month and I *still* look forward to seeing them—and Wolf Eyes.

My pants.

Danny DeVito watching Fantômas right behind drummer [and ex-Slayer member] Dave Lombardo.

A big bag of weed.

Anything by Diamanda Galas.

K-OS

The classics: Marley, Dylan, KRS-One.

Bloc Party, Coldplay, and Black Star.

No socks!

[“The world’s first supermodel”] Janice Dickinson.

Ice!

Public Enemy’s “Terminator X to the Edge of Panic.”

SAGE FRANCIS

I just listen to whatever mix CDs my friends give me. Fuck iPods, too.

Dresden Dolls.

Yellow Hawaiian shorts and a yellow summer hat. Real touristy.

No, but the dad from *Viva La Bam* was on my airplane...and so was my high school French teacher.

Favorable articles about me posted on the walls, Tom from Myspace, and veggie maki.

“Summertime” by DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince.

JEAN GRAE

The new Redman album and lots of old soul shit.

Weezer. I had a fight with my cable company so they turned off my MTV and I haven’t seen the new video.

Sake juice boxes and music.

I saw Justin Timberlake in his little army outfit, but I didn’t want to look at him so I pointed my toe in his direction and told my friends to follow my foot.

Marlboro Reds and Patrón.

Wu-Tang Clan’s “Ice Cream,” Stevie Wonder’s “All I Do,” and Kool in the Gang’s “Summer Madness.”



Caro [Bootsy Holler]

OBSESSIONS: CARO

The grand visions of a Pacific Northwest techno maverick.

Caro makes a mean mutant hybrid of minimal techno and modernized Detroit house. On *The Return of Caro* (Orac), he starts with a spine of shuffled beats, thundering bass, and clanging pianos strong enough to withstand any dancefloor. Then he packs on muscular acid freak-outs, micro-glitch nerves, and a skin of wobbly analog synths and pitch-shifted vocals; the result is a creature equally native to the soundsystem and the headphones. Meanwhile, Caro's alter-ego, Seattle resident Randy Jones, adorns the cover of this retro-futuristic album, which depicts him astride a horse. Jones explained to *XLR8R* how he looks to nature for inspiration as he attempts to meld video and audio into "visual music." *Rob Geary*

www.orac.vu

Randy Jones on visual music:

"Visual music is my primary obsession aside from music itself. If you've ever seen Oscar Fischinger or Jordan Belson's work, [they] put sounds to visuals in a way that creates visual music. I've done experimental performances, like at the Transmissions festival in Chicago, using touchpads to work on making graphics and sound happen at the same time. I'm trying to do a DVD of that stuff, composing both at the same time for an audiovisual experience—[for instance], a sparkly white angular creature will metamorphose into some tubular chair-like structure and make these chiming noises as it does so.

"It's interesting to make something that aspires to a state of nature, because nature's always the teacher in some way, with more inspiration and elegance than something you can make yourself. I'd rather have a nice horse than a fancy car—you have to have a relationship with a horse. It's a living thing that can give you love back. It's more interesting to meet a horse than it is to meet a car, for sure."



TAPE HEADS

Thurston Moore and others look back lovingly at homemade cassette comps.

In the '80s, while hip-hop DJs were refining the art of the mixtape and marketing their skills with mass duplication, home tapers were exchanging audio love letters and sharing their favorite songs on little plastic cassettes. Now Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore and over 80 other home curators contribute their memories, cover art, and track listings to a cute coffeetable book about the now-retro phenomenon of mixtapes. *Mix Tape: The Art of Cassette Culture* (hardcover; Universe Publishing, \$22.50) feels more like peeking

through diaries than reading playlists; the handcrafted cover art and handwritten song titles convey more than just careful track selection. Cassettes taught us that piracy is more intimate and sentimental than any Hallmark card could ever communicate, and this is a warm window back to a time when the major labels were declaring "Home taping is killing music!" *Marc Kate*

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CHUKKI STARR

A CONSCIOUS BRITISH DANCEHALL DJ MOVES FROM OBSCURITY TO STARR-DOM.

WORDS: SARAH BENTLEY IMAGE: NOPATTERN

"I'm not doing roots as a fashion ting," says UK reggae artist Chucki Starr. "In Jamaica last month I noticed a lot of deejays trying to come conscious when they never sang an uplifting message in their life before now. Roots reggae is my original music. It's what I feel, love and have done for most of my life."

Chucki Starr is one of those treasure chest artists you stumble across whilst riffling through the miscellaneous CD bin of a small, independent reggae store in a non-descript residential district. Maybe the store manager recommended him to you. Maybe you've seen his name on the line-up of a European reggae festival. Or maybe you've caught one of his stellar tracks on independent radio in Jamaica, the US, the UK, France, or Germany.

The sound of Chucki's 2000 album *From Crime To Cadesh* (Jet Star) or 2003's *True Guidance* (Ariwa) instantly hits you. His voice is soft, melodic, Jamaican—but with a gritty street twang that comes from growing up in Harlesden, one of London's toughest districts. Lyrically, Starr comes more like a hardcore, conscious hip-hopper than a poetic roots reggae solidier. He tackles issues such as drugs gripping the world's most impoverished areas and how to overcome resentment and jealousy if you're trying to forge a better life.

The relevance of spirituality to Chucki's music is intrinsic, but he doesn't ascribe to the practice intrinsically associated with roots reggae artists. "For me it's not about being rasta," says Chucki. "I've read certain books, seen certain things and experienced certain events that make me think the way I do. Nuff man say, 'How you sing so much consciousness and you nah dread? Rasta comes from the heart.'"

Once people are familiar with Chucki's unquestionable talent many conclude his underexposure comes from being based in the UK, where the roots reggae scene is dominated by retro dub soundsystems and large scale concerts featuring high-profile yard acts. "It is tough for new roots acts in England," concurs Starr. "We have to go to Germany and France. I get [pure] love over there."

Even more exciting, Starr has been working in Bobby Digital's unrivalled roots reggae studio with Digital's son Kali Bud; an album is due for release this autumn. "The album with Kali Bud's a yard ting—the real roots reggae one-drop vibe," says Starr spiritedly. "[In] 2005, things are going to happen for me. I can feel it."

Can't Stop It is due for release this month on Chucki Starr's own label, Starrdom Products. www.jetstar.com



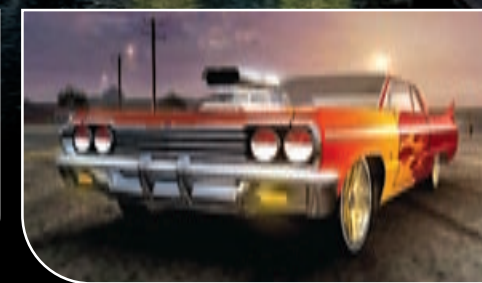
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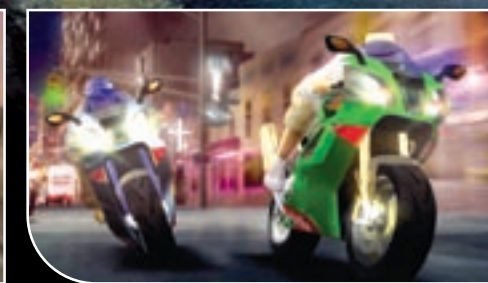
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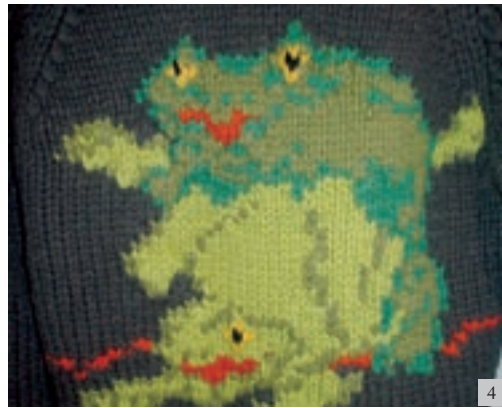
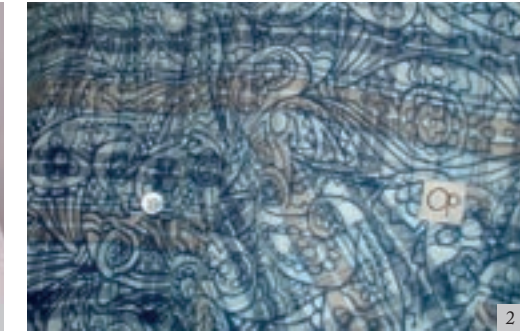
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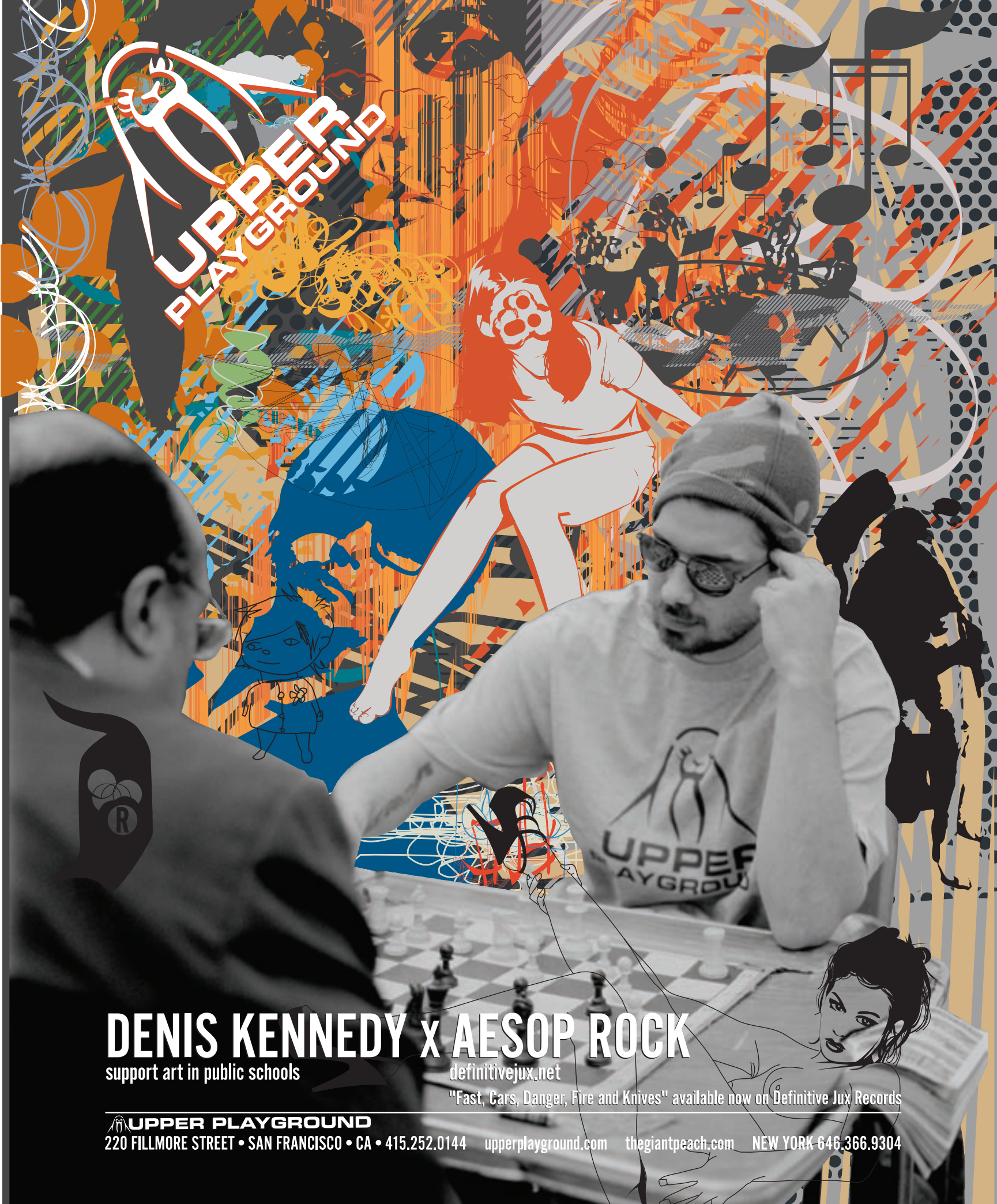


RUFF TRADE

It's the 2005 gear from the Pool, Project, and MAGIC tradeshows.

1. **Incase** can't be stopped; check these rude wallets; 2. **OP** has no fear with paisley printed on a plaid flannel; 3. **Etnies Plus** showed their best yet; 4. Sweden's **We** comes with humor and innovation; 5. Too many amazing styles of **Vans** to show on these pages; 6. **Asics'** streetwear debut; 7. **Fresh Jive** marks the death of the t-shirt trend by poly-bagging poo with this one; 8. **DC Shoes'** limited Michael Leon model; 9. Rally racing-inspired top by **Puma**; 10. **Dim Mak's** own line of tees; 11. **Strand Manufacturing** with a broken heart; 12. Seriously slick styles were unveiled from **New Era Cap**; 13. **J-Fold's** bags and wallets were clean and mean; 14. **Converse** with the classic ladies' looks.

www.pooltradeshow.com, www.magiconline.com, www.projectshow.com



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DJ Mekalek, Comel (standing), and Jaysonic [Owen Muir]

NEXT BIG THING: TIME MACHINE

True to their name, this threesome takes things back to the future.

This LA-based trio (Jaysonic, Comel, and DJ Mekalek) has made a habit of ignoring trends, transcending hip-hop's many sub-genres in the process. "Influences are important and inevitable, but they should come from all of the best things we are exposed to throughout time—not what's 'hot' right now," explains Jaysonic. Last year, Time Machine delivered *Slow Your Roll* (Glow-in-the-Dark), an album full of playful wordplay and soulful production. Keeping things moving, they just dropped *TM Radio*, a compilation resembling a radio show and featuring cohorts like The Procussions. From their early days of rapping about the merits of walking ("Block Troopin") to currently speaking on the trouble with surveillance ("Caught On Tape"), engaging subject matter is always key. "All of our songs are about something—an identifiable topic, rather than rapping about nothing, or worse, always rapping about rapping," affirms Jaysonic. *Max Herman*

TM Radio is out now on Glow-in-the-Dark. www.timemachinesound.com

VIDEOGAMES

Sharp swords and fast cars to get your blood pumping.



RISE OF THE KASAI

The Mark of Kri took the old-school beat-'em-up into the 21st century with a flexible, intuitive targeting system, solid action, and a Westernized anime aesthetic. Now the sequel, *Rise of the Kasai* (PS2, Bottlerocket Entertainment, \$39.99), arrives on the PS2, sporting the same furious combat but with a splintered narrative focus—the plot leaps back and forth in time and between characters in a *Pulp Fiction/Rashomon* style. In play, the various characters feel too similar, but the right stick-centered targeting and bashing is as satisfying as ever. *Rob Geary*

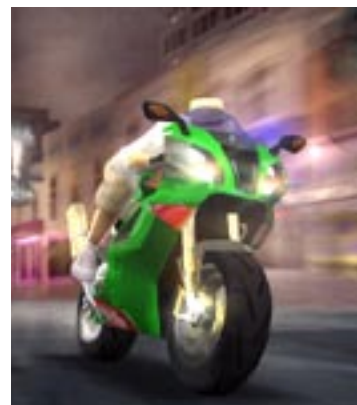
www.us.playstation.com



MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

Screeech! I just slammed the brakes on this review to take a minute to honor the amazing soundtrack embedded on this newest of the *Midnight Club* (Xbox/PS2, Rockstar Games, \$49.99) games. Opening credits are set to Calyx's roughneck drum & bass ass-kicker "Follow The Leader," and then the jaw just drops as you're pleasantly assaulted with tunes from none other than Mad Mike, Jeff Mills, Mr. Dé, M.I.A., Beenie Man, and Sean Paul. Aside from the music sounding like a day in the *XLR8R* office, we've even got our own billboard along with other compatriots such as Kid Robot, *Mass Appeal*, *Vice*, and *Tokion*. Of course, these are the subtle details that make Rockstar's games so genuine, but the racing action and graphic details are where it's at. The motion is smooth and addictive, and it's relatively easy to upgrade your car consistently without getting strapped for cash. *MC3* turbos ahead of the street racing pack. *Andrew Smith*

www.rockstargames.com



Richard Dorfmeister & Rupert Huber
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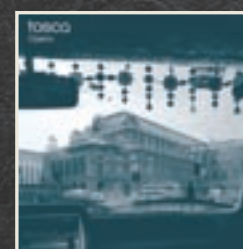
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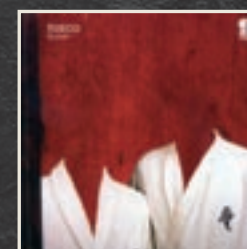
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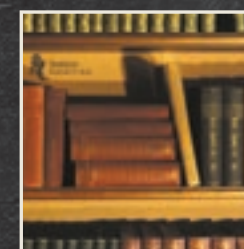
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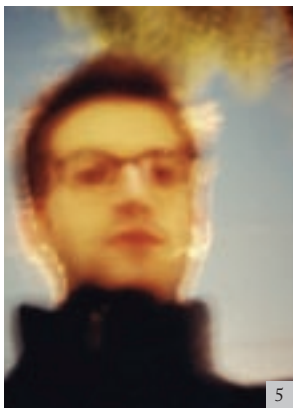




SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world

Barcelona's 12th annual **Sonar** music and experimental performance festival (June 16-18) has more A and V then you can shake a contact mic at. A taste reveals Type Records' IDM teen heartthrob **Khonnor** performing live, **Matthew Herbert's** Plat Du Jour show, and Get Physical's **Booka Shade** doing a male strip review, with **DJ T.** providing the sexy electro-house soundtrack afterwards. Add to that **Simon Russell** punking your dance with **Rough Trade** selections and dub from Denmark by **Djosos Krost** and your sunny Spanish getaway is complete. Vocalist/keyboardist **Dax from Lex Records** act **Subtle** was seriously injured after his band's tour van hit black ice and overturned in Iowa February 24. Help with a kind word or donation at www.lexrecords.com or www.daxpierson.com. Look-out Rapture, !!!, et al: legendary post-punk outfit **Gang of Four** has reformed, signed a deal with **V2 Records**, and releases a new double CD on August 30. Their first single "To Hell With Poverty 2005" is available on iTunes now. Fuck lung cancer. Anti-smoking campaign **The Truth** has teamed up with graphic designers **Jeff Soto** and **Typestereo** to design a special run of wearable art. The t-shirts will be available only on the Vans Warped tour and the urban basketball-driven **And One** tour in limited numbers. Stalk your local record store for new albums from **Micatone** (*Nomad Songs* on **Sonar Kollektiv**), **Povo** (*We Are Povo* on **Raw Fusion**), and the comp **London Soul** (Unisex) all out in June. And later this summer French hotties **Salomé de Bahia**, **Tom & Joyce**, and **Bob Sinclar** (Yellow Records) all drop crisp biscuits. Enter **Tokion Magazine's King of Zine** contest by sending them 10 copies of your zine (produced using a standard photocopy machine) and win one year of health insurance and your magazine reprinted through Tokion. Deadline is July 1st, 2005, and selections will be judged by art notables **Kevin Lyons**, **Deanne Cheuk**, **Ed Templeton**, and **KAWS**. The band **Hood** (Domino) got hoodwinked while playing a gig in Portland, OR. A bag containing **\$7,000 in cash** was stolen from



their dressing room while the band was on stage. Find out more at www.dominorecordco.com/usa. **Shakedown** is the new sub-label of Philly's **Worship Recordings** that looks to explore a wide variety of deep house sounds. Congrats to Rob Paine on the birth of his first born. www.worshiprecs.com **M-Audio's Trigger Finger** is a mobile/desktop device that allows users to strike pressure-sensitive pads with finger tips to activate or program drum sounds and operate **Ableton Live**, VJ software and devices in **Reason** and **iDrum**. www.m-audio.com Stock up your **Traktor** or **Serato** library at **Kompakt Mp3** digital record store, which offers music from over 50 (mainly techno) record labels in near-CD quality for 1.29 EUR per track at www.kompakt-mp3.net. Digital download label **Designed Disorder's Autonomous Addicts** compilation features **Deru**, **edT**, **Eight Frozen Modules**, **Hologram**, **Logreybeam**, **L'usine**, **Tipper**, and **Twerk** and downloads will generate proceeds donated to organizations such as **Amnesty International**, **UNICEF**, and the **Red Cross**. www.thedesigneddisorder.net Hot single alert: **Markus Kienzl's** newie, "Dundy Lion" (feat. Paul St. Hilaire a.k.a. Tikiman), includes remixes by Australia's **Agent 86** and **The Emperor Machine** (a.k.a. **Chicken Lips' Andy Meecham**). **Mercora's IM Radio** offers 20,000 commercial-free channels that are available daily via instant messenger service. [www.mercora.com **Underworld** headlines the four-day **Exit Festival 05** July 7-10, at Petrovaradin Fortress, Novi Sad, Federal Republic of Serbia & Montenegro. \[www.exitfestival.com\]\(http://www.exitfestival.com\) Find the **Young & Reckless** zine and other hipster necessities at \[poison-control.com\]\(http://poison-control.com\). Nottingham clubheads gets busy here: \[www.speakerspushtheair.com\]\(http://www.speakerspushtheair.com\). **XLR8R** rockets firing—ready for liftoff.](http://www.mercora.com)

1. Young & Reckless zine; 2. Booka Shade; 3. Gang of Four; 4. The Truth t-shirt; 5. Deru



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Email an original track as an MP3 to converse@xlr8r.com. Be sure to include your name, full mailing address, email and daytime telephone number. Entries must be submitted no later than Friday, July 29, 2005.



LONG, STRANGE TRIP

In the last five years, Four Tet and Caribou have shared labels, laughs, and the dreaded "folktronica" tag. With the release of their new albums on Domino, we caught up with these savants of laptop pop for a conversation about milk and ecstasy.

WORDS: TONY WARE ILLUSTRATION: GHAVA PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER GLANCY



This is going to be a moving friendship piece, isn't it?" deadpans producer Kieran Hebden, more widely known as Four Tet, as he leaves the New York hotel he's staying at with producer Dan Snaith (a.k.a. Caribou). Cheeky but proper, Hebden is in New York promoting his fourth full-length Four Tet album, *Everything Ecstatic*; he's joined by his idiosyncratic contemporary/Domino Records label mate Snaith, who has just released his own third album, *The Milk of Human Kindness*. "Friendship is act one, for sure," chuckles Snaith, the shorter and more quiet, but equally offbeat, of the two. "Then drops act two, where we dig up the shit."

"This piece is going to make people cry," quips Hebden dryly.

VISION QUEST

Two interstellar shamans—fluorescent-cloaked eccentrics who look like crossing guards at an extraterrestrial playground—walk along East Houston Street; they look odd, even for Manhattan's Lower East Side. Those brave enough to approach discover two wiry-haired gonzoes decked out in hastily assembled army surplus accoutrements and mystical webs of pink twine, being followed by a photographer. The premise is that the things Snaith and Hebden are wearing—from the brightly colored compasses around their necks to the dreamcatcher-like fishing nets they carry—are instruments the pair will use to harvest the world's sounds before taking them back to their underground

"We both milk those
loud-soft dynamics."

—Caribou

laboratories and making them into songs.

A few hours later, over drinks in the pair's hotel lobby, Hebden reflects on how the photo shoot's seemingly flippant fun carries with it a heftier subtext. "We're going to come across as absurd [in these photos], but I quite like the idea of people seeing strange pictures of us," observes Hebden. "They'll wonder why we did what we did and what we do in general. They'll wonder how it ties in to music. They'll find this point of entry and—if it interests them—they'll pursue it, trail it. So I guess we should come up with some exciting things to talk about."

THEN THERE WERE TWO

Hebden and Snaith met in 1999 at Britain's Big Chill festival, where they bonded over poking fun at the waning trip-hop trend. Since then, the two resonance wranglers—now both based out of London—have shared many things: from mp3 files to concert stages, from record labels to demos of their latest releases. As producers, they're both known for highly animated arrangements and equally kinetic live shows—a rare feat for laptop composers. As friends they dissect music jargon minutiae as quickly and honestly as each other's work. They also share a more-than-passing interest in mainstream rap (from Dipset to Kanye West to Beanie Siegel) and an appreciation for absurd humor torn from the everyday (as evidenced by a running fascination with duck necrophilia inspired by an article in London's *The Guardian*).

Since 2001, Hebden and Snaith have shared something else: the spotlight. Hebden has been releasing music since 1997, as part of post-rock trio Fridge and his solo Four Tet project (which commenced in 1998). But when Snaith released his 2001 debut as Manitoba, *Start Breaking My Heart*

(Leaf), the two producers were immediately associated; both exhibited tendencies towards melodic, polyrhythmic collage. (Snaith has since changed his alias to Caribou following a lawsuit from New York proto-punk Handsome Dick Manitoba.)

Snaith originally hails from the small Canadian town of Dundas, born to a family full of math professors who nevertheless encouraged him to take music lessons. "In Dundas everyone listened to either Mötley Crüe or Yes," says Snaith. "I had a flaming red mullet and leaned to the side that thought Emerson, Lake, and Palmer were the greatest. This gave me the appreciation for people doing things totally out of the sphere of what's culturally current, which drew me in to free jazz."

Hebden grew up in London in a middle class left-wing family. His father was an obsessive music fan, so he was bombarded from an early age by a dynamic range of music. "I would go see Chuck Berry and Don Cherry or Mudhoney and Townes van Zant in the same week," says Hebden. "When I first heard hip-hop records like Cypress Hill and De La Soul I heard all the samples and it made sense to me from the records I heard my dad play. At the same time drum & bass was happening. The intensity of being in the heart of where everyone's trying to be on the hottest stuff fueled my obsessive interest in following people's paths of influence."

Snaith was in Toronto—working toward his now-completed PhD in pure mathematics—when he and Hebden first established their relationship as symbiotic sounding boards. "This club night we put on was aimed at getting university students out," says Snaith, "and we were all about bringing Four Tet over to play free jazz and freak out all the squares. So one of the first things my friend says to Kieran is whether he brought some rare free jazz guitar record; Kieran opens up his records and is all excited instead about this Armand Van Helden record he had biked over from a label. Then he played the Beastie Boys, Madonna, Debbie Gibson. We thought he was going to clear the dancefloor and instead he played Jay-Z. We started geeking out about all kinds of records after that."

“I decided I didn’t really care if it was in time or in tune anymore.”

—Four Tet

POP VS. LAPTOP

Guitars and singing feature prominently in the Caribou live show as well, and Hebden can’t resist cracking a few jokes about that. “You do a show and some old dude always comes up and says, ‘Dude, you remind me of the Grateful Dead in 1973,’” Hebden says to Snaith in his best aged hippie accent.

“Yeah, we get a lot of Deep Purple, Pink Floyd when we play live,” admits Snaith.

“Or that time someone said, ‘That was the best show we saw since Tool, man!’” Hebden playfully jabs.

It’s no surprise Hebden’s giving Snaith a good ribbing. Performing as Four Tet, he hews close to his album technique but improvises tracks, generating abstractions from behind a computer screen—two Sony VAIO laptops running Audiomulch and Cool Edit, a Boss Dr. Sample, and Pioneer DJM-600 mixer to be exact.

Snaith initially performed the same way he produced, but found playing solo with a laptop wasn’t very convincing. He then formulated a touring band with Peter Mitton and Ryan Smith—playing dual drum kits, keys, samplers, and guitar—and the result is an immersive, percussive rock-like experience that allows Caribou to meld viscerally with the audience.

As for Hebden, he says his laptop development involved a sort of “giving up.” “The big turning point for me was I decided I didn’t really care if it was in time or in tune anymore,” he reveals. “So many think total precision is important or people will think you’re an amateur, but the crowds just want to hear something wicked. It’s about something powerful and dynamic. I see people so unaware of the crowd, but it’s important to me to address the crowd [and] react to the atmosphere.”

“Watching Dan perform it’s obvious when the crowd gets going—he and Pete play drums in a more relaxed, confident way. Ryan plays guitar like he’s going to get laid,” continues Hebden, laughing. “When shows go well for me I find myself doing things I normally would never risk. Sometimes I might play the ugliest noise for 15 minutes but I anticipate [that moment when] I’ll play a popular melody from my album and everyone will throw their arms up.”

“It’s a good sense of what works,” admits Snaith. “We both milk those loud-soft dynamics.” *Four Tet’s Everything Ecstatic and Manitoba’s The Milk of Human Kindness are out now on Domino Records.*

www.dominorecordco.com, www.fourtet.net, www.caribou.fm

OF MILK AND ECSTASY

By 2003, both artists were critically acclaimed and they reinvented themselves with their new albums, Four Tet’s *Rounds* (Domino) and Manitoba’s *Up In Flames* (Leaf/Domino). On *Rounds*, Hebden presented an even more rubbery marriage of propulsive with pastoral, while Snaith’s bursting dam of percussive run-off garnered comparisons to the maniacal psychedelia of The Boredoms.

Two years later, both have released records that sublimely refine these tendencies. *Everything Ecstatic* finds Hebden throwing off previous associations by casting aside his trademark acoustic guitar sounds; its heady rumbles and melodic slurs are intended as “a fierce celebration of sound, a million ideas happening in a concentrated amount of time.” “The thing I really like about Kieran’s new record is that it has a more aggressive sound,” says Snaith. “I can picture him making the music, getting really in to it, getting ecstatic, and finishing the album quickly.”

“I don’t know if Dan’s album is more milky,” says Kieran, laughing, when asked to describe Caribou’s *The Milk of Human Kindness*. “Maybe it’s more kind. It is more personal sounding to me, with the use of his voice. Like the track where it was just him singing with acoustic guitar, I didn’t expect that. I’d been harassing him that he needed a ballad for the longest time—something with the power of Warren G’s ‘Regulate’ or Bowie’s ‘All The Young Dudes,’ something that moved you and could be played as the slow dance at the prom.”

Snaith says that his initial intention was to get away from “wispy folk songwriting,” but he found it was better to throw out the “big plan” while recording, resulting in increasingly direct forays into metronomic Krautrock builds and acoustic immediacy. “I wasn’t going to make a gabber record simply because people were labeling me ‘folktronica,’” admits Snaith. “But I certainly saw what I was doing as a progression. I wanted to make more creative use of space, trying to make what happens in headphones extremely active without being too dense. And yet one of the things I consider the best I’ve done is pretty much just the guitar and me singing.”



FOUR TET & CARIBOU ON THEIR FAVORITE LIVE PERFORMERS:

LIGHTNING BOLT If the opportunity presented itself I would see these guys play every night for the rest of my life—part spectacle, part call to arms, and part opening of the musical heavens. *Caribou*

ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO Keeping the cosmic spiritual jazz alive...Robes, and lots of percussion. *Four Tet*

PHAROAH SANDERS The master regains form in his old age. Seeing him reminds one that it would be advised if 99 percent of bands playing now stopped immediately. *Caribou*

BJÖRK Incredible to hear that voice live, and always musically mind-blowing. *Four Tet*

IRATION STEPPAS Purveyor of dub from the year 3000. Only fully appreciated when heard through his own esophagus-rumbling sound system. *Caribou*

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE I have watched this night after night and it is always magical. *Four Tet*

SHIT AND SHINE Thor rock based on the winning principal of “greatest riff of all time plus greatest beat of all time” and repeat for half an hour. *Caribou*



broken RULES

The nine-member super team known as Bugz in the Attic continues to transcend the boundaries of future soul music. We caught up with Orin "Afronaught" Walters and Daz-I-Kue for a breakdown of how it's done.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTOS: JO METSON-SCOTT

Once upon a time, in the pretty Southwest London borough of Richmond, there was a house lovingly known as The Attic. The place belonged to an old man who owned seven businesses, among them a betting shop, a ticketing agency, and a fish restaurant. Wanting to move back up north, the man rented the flat to Luke McCarthy, who created jazzy house and chill downtempo numbers there with Phil Asher, under the name Restless Soul. And when it came time for McCarthy to find greener pastures, who should be waiting for the lease but a young Bug by the name of Orin Walters?

“I moved in to ‘guard’ the place from vagabonds and dossers,” says Walters, laughing. “And I turned it into a living, eating, Playstationing, music-making, smoking den for me and my mates. And that’s what we did, 24-7.”

BUGGED OUT

Walters, a mile-a-minute talker with a short attention span and an easy grin, is recounting where Bugz in the Attic—the nine-member DJ/producer collective whose name has become synonymous with the past, present, and future of broken beat—was born. Co-founded in 1997 by Walters (often known as Afronaught) and Paul “Seiji” Dolby, Bugz has become known for dancefloor stormers that meld funk, jazz, and house influences to drum & bass’s low-end and Frankenstein breaks, which are chopped up and put back together in a kinky, stop-start style that makes you rethink movement altogether. Now seven years old, the crew is still scoring hits—notably November 2004’s pulsive sing-along “Booty (La La)”—that appeal to DJs across the board; meanwhile, individual members have amassed an impressive collection of their own work under almost 20 different aliases including DKD, Psyan, Neon Phusion, and Afro Force.

Walters first met drum & bass producer Seiji in London’s Blackmarket Records. “Me and him both seemed to click straight away,” says Walters. “We were both buying [US] garage; we both liked Smack and Masters at Work and Eddie Perez. We got to talking and it was like ‘I’d love to do a drum & bass versions of [these songs], but at a slower tempo’—and that was the whole birth of our sort of sound.

“At the time, we were listening to Erykah Badu and Portishead. At the other end of the spectrum was 4hero, who was a massive influence on us. They were true pioneers; they were constantly looking for new parallels and pushing the boundaries out even further musically. Music is about sharing and merging and migrating and mutating and hybridizing, and they were perfect at that. Then people like Timabaland broke through with what seemed like a hybrid of drum & bass slowed down with a

US R&B/hip-hop kind of thing. To me, it was like ‘Okay, we can use those models and apply them with our methodology of making music in the UK—around a house sort of tempo—and try to make something else out of this.’”

ATTIC-TIVE BEHAVIOR

Starting in the summer of ’94, Walters and a rotating cast of friends took to his house—The Attic—to try out new ideas. “Every day people were coming round to shop on Richmond High Street and they would pop in to make a track or just hang out,” says Walters of the years between 1994 and 1998. “Seiji would bring over his sampler and stay for a couple days. Kaidi was living in Twickenham, just ‘round the corner, as was The Herbaliser crew. I’d already been working with Phil Asher and Daz-I-Kue as Blak ‘N’ Spanish. Everything organically gelled because we were friends just hanging out.”

As a sound born from the house’s good vibes started emerging, the Bugz decided to organize into something more permanent. In 1997, they crystallized the crew, and in 1999 they started their Bitasweet label as an outpost for original productions. “My ideology of the whole thing is strength in numbers,” explains Walters. “You see hundreds of bands that come and go and the thing that always stays is the management. That’s what Bugz is ultimately about—managing our umbrella for our community.”

While Bugz is lucrative enough to support nine people, it’s hardly just a business move—the crew also makes it a musical mission to push the limits of what people are expecting. “Our thing is all about going against the grain,” explains Walters, “and [because we have so many people] we have the ability to adapt to whatever brief we’re given. [For a remix], if someone asks for a real spacey vibe track or an ambient thing, then Kaidi or Cliff could do that; if they want really electronic and hard and ballsy then G-Force and Seiji ultimately produce that; if they want something gospel-y and vocal then Daz would do that. After that, it’s a case of swapping ideas and merging things.”



DECODING THE BUGZ OPERATIVES:

Listed in order shown above

DAZ-I-KUE: JACK OF ALL TRADES

Daz has engineered for the likes of Soul II Soul, Groove Chronicles, and Masters At Work and is a true vibes man. Known to get on the mic to hype the crowd whilst DJing, this soundsystem vet lays down sunshine sounds and keeps the Bugz sound in order. He’s about to move to Atlanta with his new wife, and is currently helping prison inmates produce their own tracks.

Daz says: “I’m a bit of an all-rounder; I get involved with everything. The only thing I need is sleep. If I don’t get sleep, I just go mad.”

MATT “THY LORD” LORD: THE WHIZ

As of yet, little is known about Oxford-born Matt Lord. We’ll find out soon, as he will likely be taking on more Bugz engineering after Daz decamps to Atlanta.

Daz says: “A phenomenal engineer, programmer, great all-rounder, and also a technician. When it comes to the computer and the plug-ins and all that he knows the best how to get something out of a tune.”

PAUL “SEIJI” DOLBY: THE QUIET STORM

Dolby came of age producing hardcore and jungle for the seminal Reinforced record label. He’s known for rough, dancefloor-storming broken beats that defy categorization—check 2002’s broken beat anthem “Loose Lips” for a taste. Also operates as Homecookin’, Opaque, and Oreja.

Daz says: “Seiji comes off with some beats and he’s got a really specific idea of how arrangements should run.”

MARK “G-FORCE” FORCE: THE DARK SOLDIER

Inspired by hip-hop and classic electro, this former breakdancer (specialty: The Windmill) brings Bugz heavy beats and bass. His jungle productions for Reinforced (including “Northern Exposure” and the *Just Another Number* LP) are legendary.

Daz says: “He thinks in whole other dimensions in terms of sound, doesn’t clean it up too much, and just brings the essence of raw funk.”

KAIDI “AGENT K” TATHAM: THE KEY PLAYER

He can play flute, bass, and percussion, but Tatham is best known for adding keys to nearly every major West London broken beat release. Coming from a jazz background, he boasts distinctive chops and an instinctive quickness. He and Daz made the backbone of “Booty (La La)” over Instant Messenger in a few days, and both collaborated with Dego on the DKD project.

Daz says: “He’s the keys master. He puts the soul into everything we do. He smooths the rough edges out and makes it palatable for the ladies.”

MIKEY STIRTON: MINISTER OF INFORMATION

If you’re dealing with Bugz, you’re dealing with Mikey—he handles all the communication and day-to-day operations of the outfit as well as the Bittasweet label. Still, this snarky humored organizer finds lots of time to DJ from Sheffield to Shinjuku—he’s mixed all the Bugz compilations (including *Fabriclive 13*).

Daz says: “Any business goes through him, which is fine by us because it leaves us to just get on with the creative part.”

ORIN “AFRONAUGHT” WALTERS: THE VISIONARY

A former BMX racer, this diehard US house fan flew to Chicago at the age of 18 to meet his idols: Farley “Jackmaster” Funk, Derrick Carter, and Ralphie Rosario. He runs the Mousetrap label, is a part of Neon Phusion and Blaktonez, and says his dad is one of his biggest inspirations: “He naturally is one of the greatest motivations for me because he’s belittled most of the things that I’ve done in my life. I’m always trying to prove him wrong.”

Daz says: “In terms of when a Bugz mix is done, Orin is always phenomenal at arranging the music. He’s good at making an arrangement sound more exciting.”

CLIFF “PSYAN” SCOTT: THE WISEMAN

An old-school house head, Scott used to produce with CJ Mackintosh and drive heads like DJ Pierre and Todd Terry around when they’d visit London. He gleaned a lot of production tips from going into the studio with them, which he deploys as part of Bugz and under his predominately 4/4 alias Psyan (with Orin).

Daz says: “He’s the master of the SP-1200. He loves his soulful stuff and the old-school house—like Masters at Work style. He works really well in terms of combining that stuff with the other guys’ sound.”

ALEX “AL DA BUBBLE” PHOUNTZI: THE BOUNCE MASTER

Best known as one-third of Neon Phusion (with Orin and Kaidi), Phountzi is really starting to come into his own with tracks like “Another Way” (feat. Xan Blacq) and his remix of Colonel Red’s “Sanctify.” Also trades under bouncy alias Al Da Bubble and has recorded for the UK’s Laws of Motion label and Italy’s Archive.

Daz says: “His beats just bounce along with a lot of soul and a lot of rawness—he just gets a party going on like that.”



Mark Force, Kaidi Tatham, Seiji, Mikey Stirton, Daz-I-Kue, Cliff Scott

“Music is about sharing and merging and migrating and mutating and hybridizing.”
— Orin Walters

Hill Carnival—Daz eventually turned his technical expertise to studio work, and he’s known for his talent at getting mixdowns just right. Easygoing and affable, Daz is often the one responsible for making sure all the individual voices—from Kaidi’s keys to G-Force’s bass to Alex Phountzi’s bounce—are given equal time in a Bugz tune.

“I’m the diplomat really,” he says, smiling. “If Seiji has a strong idea, he wants to stick with it and try to persuade everyone else to do it. Orin’s the stubborn one but sometimes his stubbornness brings out the best results. With Bugz mixdowns, I take a lot more time to make sure that it sounds correct. There’s so many great ideas that have been put down that we have to filter it down and bring it into its simplest form.”

BREAKING IT DOWN

Even still, it’s hard to translate Bugz in the Attic into anything simple. They’re dubbed “broken beat” artists, still they continually come up with unexpected takes—a listen to their *Got The Bug* remix collection (V2), featuring reworks of Vikter Duplaix, Slum Village, and Zero 7, reveals just how many ways they’ve got to recontextualize future soul music. As producers and people, they’re figuring out how to live in the underground but speak to the mainstream, all the while searching for the perfect beat—a blend of emotion, history, and intellect that also has dancefloor viability.

“The reason I got into house music was because I did not accept Rick Astley and Kylie Minogue,” says Walters, waxing philosophical. “I couldn’t get with going to a club and dancing in suits around handbags. Some people are happy to accept that—get plastered, waste their money, and then go back to their Monday job. Not only was [house music] an eye-opener—a conscious sort of revelation—it was a motivator that bolstered my belief in pursuing what I really wanted to be in my heart and not doing exactly what I had been told to do.”

“We’ve got to this status now with music like, what are we really doing with it? It is it about escapism? If it’s about evoking emotion and feelings, then what’s our story, what are we saying? In a lot of commercial bullshit that is forced on us, they ain’t saying shit. So let’s maybe use this music that we’ve got [as Bugz in the Attic] to say something or do something.”

Bugz in the Attic’s Got the Bug is out now on V2 Records. A retro compilation (part of the *Lifestyles* series) will be out late this month; a studio album is due early 2006. For more information on the crew’s bi-monthly Co-Op night, check www.plasticpeople.co.uk. www.bugzinthattic.co.uk

THE RIGHT MIX

If you’re having a hard time imagining nine people in one studio, you can stop now. With busy DJ schedules and a ton of side projects, the Bugz members tend to work on their own, trading bits and pieces of songs via the internet until a track takes shape. And if Orin is the spiritual core of Bugz, the keeper of the vision, then it’s Daz-I-Kue who is the outfit’s physical grounding—the majority of the Bugz tunes have been engineered by his hands.

Daz, who grew up in London’s lively Notting Hill area, has partying in his blood. “My mom used to go out with all these G.I.s back in the day,” he recalls. “The G.I.s would always bring ‘round their 7”s; I remember Rufus Thomas’ ‘Do The Funky Chicken’ and ‘The Penguin’ being played a lot. My mother didn’t get a babysitter—she used to bring me to the parties and sit me down next to the DJ booth and I’d be there, happy as Larry. I think that’s where all my interest in records came from.”

Having been involved in a soul and funk sound-system—who still play once a year the Notting



PETER GRUMMICH
Switch Off The Soap Opera CD/2LP

The clinical head-cleaning techno of Peter Grummich has appeared on *Sender*, *Kompakt* and *Ghostly's Spectral*. Finally, the man releases his debut full-length for *T. Raumschmiere's* Shitkatapult label, and it's a scorcher that lives between the sawtooth and the razor-blade. Like most techno gurus (*Alter Ego*, *Fehlmann*, etc.) Grummich's experience allows him to do the most with the least. *Crucial*. **shitkatapult**



MITCHELL AKIYAMA
Small Explosions That Are Yours To Keep CD

Montreal's resident deconstructor reveals his fourth full-length. When not running a label (*intr_version*) or playing around the world, Akiyama composes on his laptop. Each track is a careful pastiche of gamelans and guitars, saxes and strings. Distorted improvisations frame the post-facto montage. “Like a waking dream.” — *Other Music* (Sub Rosa)



ECHO DEPTH FINDERS
City of Dolls CD

Heavy water hip-hop from Novosibirsk, Russia, the largest city in Siberia. This is not a test. Guttural lo-fi beats meet dub-heavy production for a shot straight from the Ural foothills. EDF is producer *Digitalone* with *Anton Belov* (Wrong) on the mic. Through inspirations like *King Jammy* and *Busta Rhymes* the duo preaches the dub/funk gospel from somewhere in central Eurasia. Amazing. **METEOSOUND**



VARIOUS ARTISTS
4 Women No Cry CD/2LP

A collection of 4 new female voices and their unique musical musings: *Tusia Beridze* of Georgia (aka TBA), *Rosario Bléfari* of Argentina, *Catarina Pratter* of Austria and *Eglantine Gouzy* of France. All come from the art world and all play fashionable, ear-tingling sonic confections. “My favorite record in a long time. I love almost every song.” — *Jimmy Tamborello* (Dntel/The Postal Service)



SUPERPITCHER
Today CD

Microhouse's biggest sex-symbol and most stylized artist makes his DJ debut on Kompakt. Today includes treasures from the most hotly-tipped producers in the world (*Lawrence*, *Nathan Fake*, *Wighnomy Bros.*) and breathes light, love and rhythm. It is smaller, sexier and more dreamy than perhaps any mix you've ever heard. The mix CD mother warned you about. **KOMPAKT**



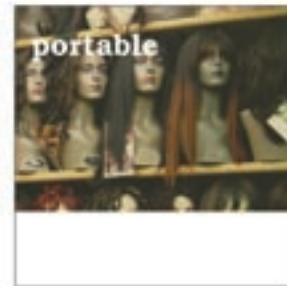
BUS FEAT. MC SOOM-T
Feelin' Dank CD/2LP

The buzz has started on MC Soom-T, the finest MC in Glasgow. Her intuitive rhymes and smart hooks form an air-tight groove when laced with beats from Bus (*Daniel Meteo* and *Tom Thiel*). If you add nods to grime, rocking handclaps and hip-house, the result is combustible. The result is *Feelin' Dank*.



YELLO
Solid Pressure LP/12"

Deluxe vinyl reissue of Switzerland's most remarkable electronic band. Expanded award-winning artwork, remastered 150 gram vinyl, gatefold edition, extensive liner notes, etc. At last this early atmospheric pop madness can hop onto a new generation of turntables. Also available: Yello's follow-up *Claro Que Si* featuring the hit “Pinball Cha Cha.” First 1,000 copies have a limited 12".



PORTABLE
Version CD/2LP

As microhouse takes hold around the world, far-flung cultures contribute to the innovative sound: the latest entrant? South Africa. Portable (aka Alan Abraham) mines ancient African polyrhythms and splices them into riddims, 4/4 beats and plenty of bass. The outcome is true Afrofuturism: gilded, clean and very listenable. Capetown's finest is clear in his vision and near-perfect in the execution.



RICHARD DAVIS
Details CD/2LP

Fresh off a recent appearance as the vocalist for *Swayzak*, and after a well-received full-length on *Punkt Music*, Richard Davis rethinks pop music and reinvents himself. *Details* is dance music you can hum when you're not in the club while Davis is a musician who follows form and structure with modern technique. Listening to Davis feels like 2005. **kitty-go**



sing it BACK

Jamie Lidell is famous for twisted glitch pop and tongue-in-cheek techno. So why is he singing like Otis Redding?

WORDS: PHILIP SHERBURNE
PHOTOS: DAVID BOWEN

Jamie Lidell was nearing the end of his live performance at Montreal's MUTEK festival last June when techno producer Mike Shannon turned to his collaborator Jay Hunsberger and asked, "Do you want my computer?" Hunsberger looked at him quizzically. "I'm done with it," continued Shannon, shaking his head. "After this, I quit making music. I'm out."

It might sound like hyperbole, but the sentiment ran rampant among musicians in attendance at the show, many of whom—like Isolée, Krikor, and Chile's Vicente Sanfuentes—stood in front of the stage, mouths agape, while Lidell whipped himself into a frenzy of howling, electronically processed soul that might best be described as gabber gospel. Equally transfixed, I wrote something similar in my notebook as I stood there, something to the extent that all other laptop musicians might as well retire.



“What am I going to do, stop singing like that because I’m not allowed to?”

PERFORMANCE ART

If you’ve ever seen Lidell live, you’ll know what I’m talking about. If you haven’t, let me explain. Jamie Lidell is not your typical “laptop artist.” (“I try not to do too much of the email show,” he says, drily.) Crafting rhythms from scratch by beatboxing into a microphone connected to his computer, he loops and processes in real time, creating dazzlingly, confoundingly complex patterns that echo funk, hip-hop, and even the hard techno of his Brighton upbringing. (Some of Lidell’s earliest tracks were for labels like Mosquito, Sativae, and Tresor; he’s also worked with the cult techno group Subhead.) Over this foundation he layers harmony upon harmony, busting into falsetto flutters, piercing shrieks, and full-bore growls. A 21st century version of the one-man band, he’s a bizarre amalgamation of Bobby McFerrin, Rahzel, Matthew Herbert, and Prince—with the unhinged, wild-eyed manner of, say, Iggy Pop or Darby Crash, but without the whole rolling-in-glass thing.

Despite the technological trickery that underpins his set—augmented by the real-time video manipulations of experimental filmmaker Pablo Fiasco, who wears a spelunker’s lamp strapped to his head—there’s nothing gimmicky about it. Lidell is a consummate performer; when he’s onstage, it’s tempting to say he’s less a musician than a performance artist. When a microphone fails, his interaction with the soundman (which can verge on abuse) becomes a part of the set, a sing-songy upbraiding that’s as uncomfortable to witness as it is exhilarating: “Can we get this fucking microphone on, *puh-lee-eeee-ah-ah-ah-eeeeeeze?!?*”

Watching Lidell can be exhausting. His songs—even the cover versions he performs—are all but unrecognizable, and his set list is less a discrete collection of songs than a roiling wave of energy that crests and crests and crests, sucking energy from the audience as it arcs toward climax. Even his stage banter can be unnerving. At MUTEK, somewhere toward the end of his set—the closing set of the entire festival—he paused, wiping sweat from his brow, and gestured at the turntables, yelling, “Who’s next on the wheels of steel?” The audience was silent, hoping that no DJ would be fool enough to think that he could possibly follow Lidell’s act. None did, and the singer launched into another explosion of cyborg soul, and another, and another.

TORCH SONGS

Lidell’s new album is titled *Multiply*, but it might as well be called *Mystify*. While he has increasingly built his reputation on his mercurial live show, *Multiply* sounds very little like it. A collection of what can best be described as avant-soul numbers, it also bears scant relation to his last record, *Muddlin Gear*, or even to his glitch ‘n’ blues project Super_Collider, with Cristian Vogel.

Early reactions to the record have been mixed; on the I Love Music bulletin board, some posters even compared it to Terence Trent D’Arby. And predictably, for a white artist mining the soul canon, Lidell is finding himself fending off charges

of being ironic.

“All these issues I’m conscious of,” says Lidell, “but they’re very much in the back of my mind. When I made the album it was allowing me to reach out to old friends who were never down with techno and electronica and such, they just liked nice tunes. As I’m getting to 31, an album like this connects with them in a way. If I’d just done an album to satisfy the high echelons of the music kingdom, I would’ve again appeared like a brat or a nerd or a know-it-all or whatever, and I’ve got enough of that in me not to cultivate it further.”

Warp Records, according to Lidell, is at a loss with how exactly to market this phase of the erstwhile drill & bass rebel’s career; he claims the label, perhaps as a last resort, is attempting to pigeonhole him as a sort of techno Beck figure.

“[Beck’s] crazy ironic, and I don’t think I am,” he continues. “I try to lay it bare on *Multiply*. My style is definitely a soul style. And if you like it, you like it; if you don’t, you don’t. What am I going to do, stop singing like that because I’m not allowed to? I have to suddenly sound like The Streets because I’m English?”

GENUINE ARTICLE

Irony aside—and it is hard to hear anything sardonic in Lidell’s passionate invocations—the album is a pastiche of American R&B styles. “Multiply” is a more-or-less blatant rip of Otis Redding’s “Sittin’ on the Dock of the Bay,” an homage so faithful it’s a mashup in waiting. “When I Come Back Around” resonates with Prince’s tried and true amalgam of jazz, funk, and rock; and Stevie Wonder, Al Green, and Marvin Gaye all make themselves heard in Lidell’s trawl through the decades.

“People are happy to make comparisons, really wild ones,” says Lidell in his defense, “comparing me to George Clinton or Prince or whatever. Sure, I love those guys, but I wouldn’t say it’s ironic. It’s not meant to be—I feel like I’m singing from the heart. People love to manufacture that beef or keep that old torch burning, but a lot of black artists themselves are crazily mocking the past. The sense of purity that people try to imagine is there can be a form of digging their heels in.”

“Purity” is a word to which Lidell returns several times; clearly, what marks *Multiply* for him is its sense of simplicity. “I thought, ‘I want a daytime record, a record that has its appeal where first thing in the morning you put it on,’” he says. “And also, I wanted to avoid the double/triple meaning, the metaphor world that was so much a part of Super_Collider. I wanted to steer clear of that and deliver an almost childlike kind of purity to the message, just filter it down until I was becoming more vulnerable, allowing myself to be exposed and take the criticism that goes with that.”

“Mind you, having said all that,” he continues, “I played it for my mum, and she said, ‘I like the album, but I prefer the live show, it feels more like you.’ I was like, ‘Nice one, mum.’”

Jamie Lidell’s *Multiply* is out now on Warp Records. www.warprecords.com



JAMIE LIDELL’S TOP FIVE THINGS THAT MAKE A GOOD LIVE SHOW.

1. It’s got to actually be *live*. I mean, call me crazy but I don’t particularly wish to see my fellow artists checking emails up on stage.
2. It’s gotta make me do the worm at least four times an hour. Moving air as a profession is one thing. I want to see the air stand up and get a shimmer on.
3. It’s got to sound different to my album copy.
4. It’s gotta nag and nudge the edge. I mean, push the edge not the rim. Let’s see what you can *really* do up there.
5. It’s got to rollercoaster my mind out of its constrictions.

For more top fives from Jamie Lidell, visit www.xlr8r.com.



SOLO

"You have to arrive at a point where you just don't care anymore and get back to your most intuitive work."

MISSION

It seems absurd that there might be negative consequences to producing a bona fide classic record. But it's possible to come up with a list of artists (Derrick May being the most obvious example) who would rather settle for early retirement and an untarnished legacy than try to compete with their former glory.

Frankfurt-based Rajko Mueller (better known as Isolée) refutes the suggestion that the otherworldly charms of "Beau Mot Plage"—1999's most unique house single, which sold over 20,000 copies—made him consider packing it all in. But he readily admits that being thrust so suddenly into the lime-light had its drawbacks: "There is a part of the process of becoming a professional musician where you lose all of the innocence that you had when you first started out," he says. "All of a sudden you realize there is an audience, journalists and so on, that have expectations for your work—at times it became less fun for me to make music."

Mueller has been tracked down in Mexico, having just performed at the MUTEK festival. Although the setting gives some indication of his stature in electronic music, he appears guarded, sensitive even, about what he has achieved—his responses are carefully weighed and clearly thought through before being offered. Four years after his 2001 debut LP, *Rest*, he has just set out on the promotional tour for the follow-up, *We Are Monster*. Just three singles and a handful of remixes were proffered in the interim between albums. "Of course I felt under pressure," says Mueller, "People were very curious about what was coming next." *We Are Monster* represents Mueller finally having come to terms with those expectations. "You have to arrive at a point where you just don't care any-

After four years of solitude, Frankfurt's house innovator, Isolée, returns with a plucky new monster.

WORDS: DAVE STENTON PHOTO: BERND WESTPHAL

more and get back to your most intuitive work."

Aside from one single for Freundinnen and two for Classic—who licensed "Beau Mot Plage" and commissioned remixes before releasing the follow-up, "Brazil.com" (previously only available on the *Trip Do Brazil 2* compilation)—all of Mueller's Isolée releases have been for the near faultless German house label Playhouse. Not surprisingly, Isolée is routinely associated with labelmates like Losoul and Ricardo Villalobos. But this comparison is misguided—the trait each Isolée record shares is an organic fluidity, a sense that each twist and turn of the groove sounds different every time you listen. It's Mueller's ability to craft house music that actually improves away from the confines of the dance-floor that truly sets him apart.

By eschewing entirely the quick fixes and club functionality that all too many of his contemporaries have become concerned with, Mueller is able to concentrate on what really matters—developing something new. "I believe that musical ideas which are too obvious become boring very quickly," he states. "I try to do something which lasts longer, or is a little deeper, which means that it won't be obvious on the first listen and that it will take time to get into." Mueller's aim is not always to do something that is intentionally complicated, though. "I think that *We Are Monster* is more accessible [than *Rest*]. But it feels sometimes like people don't want me to say that, because they think it could mean a loss of quality."

We Are Monster is, undoubtedly, a more approachable record than *Rest*. From an artist renowned for surprises, this is perhaps the biggest yet. Previously, Mueller has inhabited his own musical spectrum entirely—it was impossible to assign a specific period, or group of contem-

poraries, with which his music fit. *We Are Monster* has very clear reference points—for the first time, parallels with other artists can be drawn, particularly with the spacey electronic disco of fellow European producer Joakim (one of Mueller's current favorite artists).

Although *We Are Monster* finds Mueller identifying kindred spirits, it is still very much an Isolée record—with all the weird, wonderful wizardry that entails. Why Mueller now has company where previously he had none is open to debate. One explanation is that he has been so inspired by a new crop of producers that he has subconsciously reshaped his sound in order to fit in. A more likely scenario is that his impeccable body of work has paved the way for greater ingenuity in house music—and it's only now that the chasing pack has begun to catch up. Asked which scenario he thinks is closest to the truth, Mueller is characteristically understated to the last: "I think it is perhaps a bit of both."

We Are Monster is out now on Playhouse. www.ongaku.de

"I work on the outer field of pop and experimental."



POPscience

Fennesz scours the edges of popular music for the sounds of tomorrow.

WORDS: MARK PYTLIK ILLUSTRATION: NIGEL DENNIS

It's impossible to spend a night in Vienna without being reminded of Austria's imposing musical history. With a rich tradition of composers that dates back three centuries, classical music has insinuated itself into the city's buildings, language, and air. Its presence is so pronounced that, these days, Austria's musical activity has basically organized itself into two schools—those who are eager to walk with tradition and those who are eager to transcend it.

For Viennese composer Christian Fennesz, the road to the latter leads through what many consider to be classical music's formal antithesis: pop. Although his output is frequently lumped into the catch-all ghetto of avant-garde, he always composes with pop's melody and immediacy in the back of his mind. It's a sensibility that has kept him suspended between aesthetics for his entire career. "What I always say if people are asking me is that I work on the outer field of pop and experimental," he says, on the line from his Paris apartment. "I'm in between somewhere...but if you were to ask me what I'm doing now, I'm trying to develop pop music into something else, from my very own point of view."

A bit of background: following a four-year stint as the guitarist and singer for the Austrian rock trio Maische, Fennesz released his first solo material on the Mego label in 1995. Although he quickly developed a reputation as one of electronic music's most interesting composers, he wouldn't find a wider audience until 2001

with the release of the stunning *Endless Summer*. Named in homage to Brian Wilson, it married the glitchy, superstring particles of Fennesz's most accomplished sound design work with sunny, melodic songcraft. Subsequent solo full-lengths—2003's underrated laptop set *Live In Japan* and 2004's glimmering *Venice*—cemented his status as a bridge between the sometimes stultifyingly academic world of laptop composition and the more accessible climes of pop.

An accomplished guitarist and improvisational artist who has collaborated with the likes of Keith Rowe, Jim O'Rourke, and Peter Rehberg ("It keeps the musician and the player in me alive," he says), Fennesz describes a lot of his home listening selections as "cheesy." "Sometimes I really shock people," he says. "I've been listening to a lot of New Order records again; I really love them. And at the moment, we've secretly been downloading Keane tracks! They have really nice melodies."

Whether in the spaces between experimental music and pop or the fuzzy borders that separate the tasteful from the gauche, Fennesz seems particularly drawn to junction points. But ask him to define the specific characteristics that make music cheesy and he lights up with exasperation. "That question has been in my mind all my life," he sighs. "It's so difficult to say—there's such a fine line between cheese and good taste. This is the golden line, and for me it's the most interesting thing ever."

"I have [an eight-year-old daughter] and she's very musical," he continues. "She plays piano and now she's into pop music. She's totally into melodies that I find too cheap, so we'll have those discussions, and she explains it in such an interesting way that it makes me overthink the whole thing again."

Similarly, it's the promise of perfect alchemy between his chosen forms that drives him to keep making music. "I have this vision of a perfect track that I want to complete, but I never get there," he says. "It's a mixture of really great sound design with the essence of what a good pop song should be."

While his next studio album isn't likely to surface until at least 2006, Fennesz has no shortage of projects on the go. In addition to another remix for the Junior Boys, a collaboration with a Belgian string quartet, and two electronic improv releases with composer Ryuichi Sakamoto, he's currently promoting two DVDs. *Liquid Music*, out now, is a concert document that will allow viewers to mix and match a selection of live performances with films from Fennesz's longtime visuals partner, Jon Wozencroft. The second, which is in the works, will combine polished-up versions of tracks from *Hotel Parallel*, *Endless Summer*, and *Venice* with short films inspired by the music. "I would like to remaster the *Endless Summer* tracks a little bit," Fennesz admits. "I do want to keep it as harsh as it is but there are a few things I'm not so happy with. Then [we will] commission filmmakers to do films for every single track, so it's very exciting."

In the meantime, the Austrian is enjoying a luxury he's never been able to indulge in before: time. "For the first time in my life, I don't have to work all the time," he says. "The last record sold really well [so] there's not so much stress. The fans I have, there aren't many, but they're really fantastic; they're all over the world and they're actually really following my work. It feels great."

Fennesz and Jon Wozencroft's *Liquid Music* DVD is out now. Find music by Fennesz on Touch Recordings. www.touchmusic.org.uk, www.fennesz.com



ELECTRIC company

Congo's Konono N°1 uses amplifiers, pots, and pans to wake the dead.
WORDS: STEVE MARCHESE

The famed French poet and fableist Jean de la Fontaine has been quoted as saying that those who don't make noise are dangerous. If that's true, then Congolese ensemble Konono N°1 is the safest group going. The brave collective routinely faces off with death—not under the darkness of night or with head buried beneath covers, but from behind a jerry-rigged wall of engaging and potently ear-shattering rhythm and sound.

Konono N°1 (pronounced “Koh-noe-noe Number One”) was founded over 25 years ago by Mingiedi, a virtuoso manipulator of the *likembe*, a traditional African instrument more commonly known as a thumb piano. In the mid-'80s, the group was “discovered” by Belgian producer Vincent Kenis, who—in addition to working with acts like Zap Mama and Balkan Gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks—has become one of the foremost historians of urban Congolese music.

The story of Konono N°1, like that of many central Africans, is one centered on family, music, and death, and the communication borne of their

inevitable overlapping in a region known for ceaseless political upheaval and unthinkable wartime atrocity. In moving from the organic utterances of the bush to the cacophonous din of the city, the communication between Mingiedi, his cohorts (some of whom are family members), and deceased ancestors was somehow lost. They were left with only one choice: “Konono N°1's music is first and foremost a message to their ancestors,” confirms Kenis. “To make sure they hear it loud and clear despite the very high noise level of a city such as Kinshasa, amplification is a necessity.”

Mingiedi augments his *likembes* with makeshift electrification, even using magnets salvaged from old car parts to forge handmade microphones. Once plugged in, the traditional repertoire of the group, which draws largely from the extended percussive repetition of traditional African Bazombo trance, was transformed into a sound that would eventually be adopted by a niche group of electronic music and avant-rock fans. “The electrified *likembe* is really a new instrument, played with another technique from another planet,” says Kenis. “Like Hendrix or Sun Ra, Mingiedi is from the future.”

Over 20 years after his initial discovery, Kenis has memorialized the group with some help from Belgium's Crammed Discs label. The first release in their *Congotronics* series compiles seven hypnotizing Konono N°1 tracks. Feverishly paced and

refreshingly unfamiliar, the music is a snapshot of a dust-painted, heavily trafficked African street. It is the alien sounds of relocation—the *likembes* are like mouths, their teeth firm metal rods that come to life and scream for ancestral recognition.

An amplified *likembe* sounds a little like electricity being painted onto a sheet of aluminum by an airbrush with a partially obstructed nozzle. It just spits through the speakers with the uneven might of an overdriven vibraphone. It truly is unlike any other instrument on the planet and—without getting too scientific—is apparently the generator of new notes and scales. “To me, part of the interest brought by Konono's music lies in the fact that these notes are totally different from those we're used to hearing and the underlying melodies they play hit our sensibilities strongly,” says Kenis.

But Konono N°1 has a larger appeal, one independent of the more technical elements of the science of sound. Simply put, they are loud. They've been known to set up in front of a wall of speakers when they play live and have shared the stage with another band known for sheer volume, Dutch hardcore improvisers The Ex. Mixing traditional and makeshift percussion (pots, pans, car parts) with bass, mid, and treble *likembes*, the 12-member group (which also consists of five dancers and a self-appointed “president”) thickens the already dense mélange of sound with chanted lyrics that

touch upon subjects like collective death and forbidden marriage. Like a lot of African music, the optimism of the composition belies the heavy subject matter of its lyrics.

For most listeners, the appeal of Konono N°1 (and the other artists in the *Congotronics* series) is its honesty and raw power. Dave Howell of London's FatCat Records, responsible for the recent release of a Konono N°1 split 12” with New Zealand's The Dead C, shares producer Kenis' high regard for the bands' uncompromising approach. “People are responding so well to this music because, as a bottom line, it is just really awesome, engaging, raw, pure, and exciting stuff. I mean, you just can't listen to it without being pulled in.”

Congotronics is out now on Crammed Discs/Ache Records. The Konono N°1/The Dead C Split Series 12” is out now on FatCat. www.crammed.be, www.acherecords.com, www.fat-cat.co.uk

BLOCK PARTY

It not only takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village to make a magazine. Since there are quite a few weeks when we never leave the five-block radius surrounding our offices, we decided this fashion spread should feature the people we see every day. Without their wares—caffeine, trail mix, laundry detergent, good hair—we might not even be able to do our jobs.

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK
STYLING: VIVIAN HOST

LLOYD AND BRYANT FROM LAUNDERLAND
425 Divisadero St. at Oak

Jamaican-born Lloyd and his family run the laundromat downstairs from our office. He can often be found talking to his wife, Jennifer, or chilling outside in his white delivery van, listening to reggae with Suga Candy, an MC friend from Jamaica. He's seen here with his son Bryant.

Lloyd and Bryant wear shoes by Puma's Jamaican collection; Bryant wears a grey jacket from Puma's Jamaican collection; all other clothes are their own.



CARLOS AND MARIO FROM THE COUNTRY CHEESE SHOP
415 Divisadero St. at Oak
Mario and his cousin from Mexico run the cheese shop downstairs, which caters to those in the office who like healthy snacks; photographer Chris Woodcock particularly enjoys the spicy dried mangos and bulk cashews. Former full-time employee Carlos sometimes pops in to help the pair sling feta and imported paté.
Carlos wears an electric green t-shirt, grey shorts, and moto-X gloves from Fox Racing; Mario wears a black polo, white pinstripe shorts, flip-flops and moto-X gloves from Fox Racing.



INKEN AND CHRISTIAAN FROM BEANBAG CAFE
601 Divisadero St. at Hayes
German-born Inken and Dutch native Christiaan work the morning shift at local coffeehouse Beanbag. Stylist and clothing designer Christiaan can always be counted on for a huge smile and the latest gossip, while erstwhile photographer Inken serves up your latte and bagel with an enigmatic smile.
Inken wears a red dress by Gsus Industries and green slip-ons by BC Shoes; Christiaan wears a cable knit-print tank by Gsus Industries, jeans by Diesel, and his own belt and sandals.



JESSICA, ONIKA, SARAH, AND JAYNE FROM EDO
601 Haight St. at Steiner

Jayne and Chr (not pictured) have owned and operated Edo Salon since 1999. Almost everyone we know either gets their hair done here, is friends with or has dated one of the stylists or receptionists, or has been styled by these girls for one of many local fashion shows or photo shoots in which they've been involved.

Jessica wears an Ezekiel tank, Diesel Jeans, and her own belt and shoes; Onika wears a white halter dress by Ezekiel, Vans checkered slip-ons, and her own tights; Sarah wears a beige print shirt by Ezekiel, white miniskirt by Dickies, and her own belt and shoes; Jane wears a lavender tank by Ezekiel, shoes by Irregular Choice, and her own red cord shorts.

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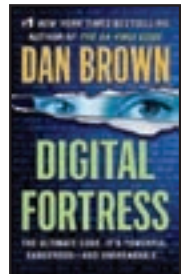
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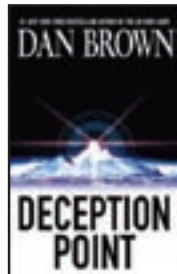
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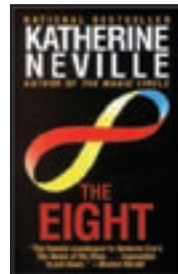
Angels & Demons
Dan Brown



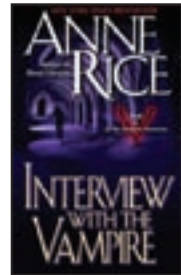
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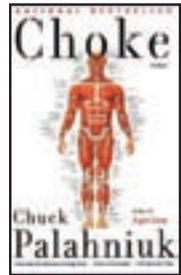
Deception Point
Dan Brown



The Eight
Katherine Neville



Interview with the Vampire
Anne Rice



Choke
Chuck Palahniuk



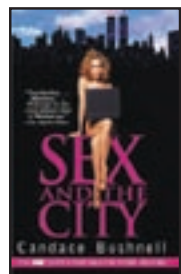
Carter Beats the Devil
Glen David Gold



Geek Love
Katherine Dunn



Bergdorf Blondes
Plum Sykes



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Candace Bushnell



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Sophie Kinsella



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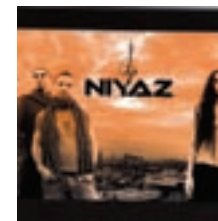
ALBUM REVIEWS

06.05

CHEB I SABBABH
LA KAHENA
Six Degrees/US/CD

NIYAZ
Six Degrees/US/CD

MIDIVAL PUNDITZ
MIDIVAL TIMES
Six Degrees/US/CD



GLOBAL BEATS LOOK EAST TO FUSE TRADITION WITH MODERNITY.

While the technological boost in recorded music has been going strong for nearly 130 years—since Thomas Edison's first single, "Mary Had a Little Lamb," dropped in 1877—the past decade has seen sonic globalization occur at a boggling rate. The ways we create and experience music are steeped in transient mythology, and in the wake artists such as these three Six Degrees creators are tweaking and refining classical and sacred music with an electronic twist. With DJs and artists from all diasporas partaking in this burgeoning scene, India and the Middle East are hotbeds for global beat fusion.

The first stop is actually west, in North Africa, where DJ Cheb i Sabbah has redefined the parameters of Algerian and Moroccan folk. Because of acoustic similarities, Algeria's *rai* and *chaabi* are often bunched with Arabic and Persian sounds, even if African by geography. Sabbah—who recently finished a gorgeous trilogy of digitally refined South Asian Carnatic and Hindustani devotional tunes—here showcases a host of female vocal groups. The *sintir* (bass lute)-led Gnawa (mystic musicians from Morocco) ceremonial tracks, by artists like B'net Marrakech and Brahim Elbelkani, maintain

their trance-like nature—full of repetitive low-end pulses tinged with *krakebs* (metal clappers)—even as they're tempered ever so delicately with electronic flourishes. Sabbah, as DJ and human, is very conscious of this music's sacred aspects, never impinging on the songs to guarantee dancefloor success. He employs the watery sounds of *oud*, *qanun*, and *tablas* with a weighty respect.

Niyaz's (pronounced NEE-az) beautiful testament to 21st century Persian poetry also respects the original form. Former Vas vocalist Azam Ali, long skilled in the art of translating Urdu and Farsi text into song, uses the words of Rumi, Sauda, and others on this band's self-titled debut. Backed by multi-instrumentalist Loga Ramin Torkian (Axiom of Choice) and producer Carmen Rizzo (Seal, Paul Oakenfold, Cirque du Soleil, Khaled), Niyaz is the closest to organic digitalism imaginable: you never know where the mouse pad ends and animal skin begins.

Like Sabbah's *La Kahena*, *Niyaz* is devotional by nature, weaving deft poetics about being consumed by divine flames into patient textures of *dhol*, *tholak*, *darbuka*, and synthesizers. When the trio attacks the

dancefloor fully with the 110-bpm "Dilruba," ancient Persia finds a new home in stacks of subwoofers.

The intention of the Delhi-based MIDival PunditZ may not be bridging classical and modern, but the swirling array of sitars, tablas, and *sarangis* on *Midival Times* certainly blurs those lines. The guests helping out on this release—*sarangi* maestro Ustad Sultan Khan, sitar player Anoushka Shankar, and ghazal vocalist Vishal Vaid—are a virtual who's-who of the classical Indian music pantheon. The MIDival PunditZ's duo of Tapan Raj and Gaurav Raina offer the most innovative fusions of these three Six Degrees albums, most likely due to their infamous Cyber Mephil parties and stellar remix work. Their lighter work is equally beatific: Khan's vocal on "Saathi" and Vaid's heartbreakingly gorgeous "Khayaal" ensure such. But when they turn it up, as on "136," featuring a vocal assault by actor Ajay Naidu, there's certain danger to their beauty. This balance connects this groundbreaking trio of artists: old sounds reinvented with a touch of modern class.

Derek Beres



COLLEEN
THE GOLDEN MORNING BREAKS
Leaf/US/CD

Colleen is a person—Parisian Cécile Schott, a producer who cobbles together minute, meditative, and antiquated acoustics. But perhaps Colleen is also a personification. Perhaps Colleen is a little girl dreaming of an underwater string quartet featuring a harpsichord-plucking lobster, as in “Summer Water.” Or perhaps she’s an adolescent, practicing to be a ballerina as she listens to a porcelain music box pirouetting in “The Heart Harmonicon.” Or maybe she’s an adult, learning shiatsu massage and reiki healing in a wellness center’s wind chime-filled courtyard, as in “The Happy Sea.” Maybe she’s vacationing in Kyoto, enthralled in a Zen garden as a plaintive *koto* chimes, as the title track implies. Compared to the vague, nostalgic tape loop chimera that was her 2003 debut, *Breaks* is cohesive, evoking memory after sepia-toned memory of a well-traveled life. *Tony Ware*



302ACID
0005
Em:t/UK/CD

Intense and edgy yet poignant and melancholic by turns, 302Acid’s *0005* is everything a classic “ambient” album should be. It has all the necessary ingredients—solemn synth textures that extend for miles, scattered wisps of special effects and computer blips, inflections of dub, and wave upon wave of triumphantly epic string reverberations. Excellent tracks abound but this writer’s personal favorite may be “Mortrarriggus,” whose shadowy, post-apocalyptic gloom conjures visions of the weather worn streets of a monolithic Gotham of the future. Other standouts include “Flutter,” a soulful, Autechre-echoing piece, and “Nocturnum,” whose ultra-minimalistic approach to harmony and meter brings to mind the later compositions of Richie Hawtin. *Alexander Posell*

ANNIE
ANNIEMAL
Big Beat/UK/CD

Poised for the kind of global underground/overground stardom currently held by James Murphy and The DFA, Annie (Norway’s answer to Kylie) has, with *Anniemal*, made the kind of record I suspect a lot of people have been waiting for. This is music that sounds infectious in a club and inspires dance sessions in one’s bedroom. As if production courtesy of Röyksopp and Richard X isn’t enough, a combination of effortless pop sensibilities (somewhere between Madonna, Tom Tom Club, and Björk) and smart, whimsical metaphorical license elevates *Anniemal* even higher. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

ARK
CALIENTE
Perlon/GER/CD

On his third album, the frizzy-haired Frenchman known as Ark runs a wire across minimal techno’s long, glossy runway, and uses the resulting crash-bang collapse as the source for his delightfully messy beats. Ark’s always drawn as much from hip-hop as techno, and here his cross-cutting chaos continues in the same vein, counterposing blocky piano samples with jittery drum programming and gum-on-the-sole basslines. Best of all, his anthemic “I like the way your booty shake” tune (a.k.a. “Sucubz”) gets a reprise, and Jamie Lidell weighs in with some robot soul. *Philip Sherburne*

AUTECHRE
UNTILTED
Warp/UK/CD

So here is Autechre Version 8.0. Rob Brown and Sean Booth further brandish their electro-funk roots, but mutate their beats into beasts which get shot down from trees, ear-tagged, and thrown in a zoo. Jumbled, broken-footed percussion is at the fore with textures as afterthoughts. The post-techno swordsmanship on the beats is quite deft, but very little is memorable. The lone exception is the *taiko*-like *danse macabre* of “Pro Radii,” where phantom jazz melodies and hailing DSP noises intoxicate. Better luck next time. *Cameron Macdonald*

BLUEPRINT
1988
Rhymesayers/US/CD

MCs mention ‘88 in songs more than any other year in history. But as countless acts reminisce about arguably the greatest year in hip-hop, MC/producer Blueprint has opted to model his entire solo debut as a tribute to it. Whether he’s boasting about the power of his stereo on “Boom Box” or refusing to give into the stronghold of the boys in blue on “Kill Me First,” “Print effectively channels the past energy of Rakim, Public Enemy, and every ‘88 act in between. All the while he cleverly reveals his multifaceted personality, and *1988* amounts to a top-notch solo arrival. *Max Herman*

CARO
THE RETURN OF CARO
Orac/US/CD

Caro’s music recalls buoyant early ‘90s Detroit techno, when the genre was becoming warmer and more inclusive. You can hear traces of vintage ‘80s acid bleed through, but the edge isn’t there, instead replaced by bubbly synths and playful beats. “Ah, Ah, Ah” opens things up with Herbert-like squelches and a slow-building beat. “We Can Build It” features prickly synths that soon click with a subtle, shifting beat. “Heavy Wheel” struts by with a vamping, Latin-tinged piano beat. It all adds up to a funky collection of low-key tracks that keeps things moving. *Patrick Sisson*

CHIN CHIN
SHALLOW DIVE
Deep Water/UK/CD

Blending an elegant melodic aesthetic, subtle electronics, and a smattering of studio wizardry, Chin Chin’s *Shallow Dive* sits firmly on the fence between lounge, IDM, and folk. Though the technological element of the recording is significant, enough space is left for the acoustic instruments to breathe, making for quite a pleasant excursion into dreamland. Melancholy string textures and a dash of glitch bring to mind images of both nature and technology, future and past, light and dark. Lovely. *Alexander Posell*

COH
0397POST-POP
Mego/AUS/CD

“Everything is joined as one in meaningless repetition/I suppose we’ll all just have a good laugh tonight,” mutters a bloke after nearly an hour of machines droning and snapping into oblivion. On the 2003-recorded portion of *0397Post-Pop*, Ivan Pavlov (COH) devises some fine pornography, repeating titillating noises over and

over until boredom would pay top dollar for a new scenario. “Da Kota Rap (feat. Mia Farrow)” is a gas for shushing the *Rosemary’s Baby* theme while Pavlov indulges in his glitches. The 1997-recorded half of this record is comprised of decent ambient drone works that often resemble Pan Sonic b-sides. No punchline though. *Cameron Macdonald*

C-RAYZ WALZ
THE YEAR OF THE BEAST
Definitive Jux/US/CD

Def Jux’s most underrated lyricist contests the idea that freestyle champs can’t make quality records. In the past, sub-par production has marred the Bronx native’s efforts. This time, he chooses beats that better complement his gritty delivery. Longtime affiliate Belief delivers a pulsating dub sound on “Pink,” which features Jean Grae. The Welfare Poets craft a grimy vibe for C-Rayz and M-1 of Dead Prez to pontificate on the pros and cons of dealing “Black Soap.” And tracks like “Blackout,” which cleverly examine racial identity issues, prove that there is more to C-Rayz’s raps than knockout punchlines. *James Mayo*

DAEDELUS
EXQUISITE CORPSE
Mush/US/CD

MF Doom speaks the truth when he says, “This beat is strictly retarded, yo/sound like it came off the late Ricky Ricardo show.” Daedelus gets a lot of mileage from the contrast between his fly beats and string-soaked samples from old TV soundtracks and public domain 78s. Mike Ladd guests, describing the forlorn smell of Taco Bell as experienced by an expat returning to the US, and Jogger’s remix has pants-wettingly good synths. *Exquisite Corpse* is a concept album about death—it doesn’t sound like showtune about getting gunned down in Vegas, gangsta-style, but more like a lullaby for dying in your sleep. *Ben Bush*

DEMPSEY
SUNRISE SUNSET
Output/UK/CD

Kieran “Four Tet” Hebden’s rock band, Dempsey, sits squarely in the Gorillaz/Cornershop genre of genre-bending, hook-based pop. Hebden produced half the tracks, which seamlessly merge live and sampled elements. “Big Time” jumps from an East Indian riff to blues rock with layers of looped harmonicas and distorted flutes. When frontman Geoff McIntyre sings about doomed romance, you can’t help but think the ladies left him because they couldn’t believe a word he says. Perhaps the most disingenuous singer in rock, when he mentions trains or dry martinis, it’s like he’s never encountered these objects, only heard them mentioned on Rolling Stones records. *Ben Bush*

EFTERKLANG
SPRINGER
Leaf/UK/CD

Originally released in 2003 on Efterklang’s own Rumraket label, *Springer* sounds like a Sigur Rós reissue. The sonic similarities between both bands’ approaches are so striking that Efterklang’s songs—all of which contain English lyrics—could easily be mistaken for translations of the Icelandic group’s originals. The twinkling bells, gloomy singing, and epic endings on songs like “Kloy Gun” follow the formula perfectly, the only deviation being a penchant for glitchy, electronic production reminiscent of Telefon Tel Aviv. That being said, *Springer* is a collection of lush, gorgeous songs. Any band, even Sigur Rós, would be happy to have recorded them. *Patrick Sisson*

ELECTRONICAT
VOODOO MAN
Disko B/GER/CD

Going beyond the electroclash curtain, Electronicat reveals some nu-wave and glam rock wizardry on his latest, *Voodoo Man*. It’s hard not to hear the Talking Heads influence on the oscillating bass monster “Dans Les Bois” or Iggy Pop on “Flesh + Accessories.” Even older rockabilly-styled guitar riffs punctuate stuff like “A Lover’s Suitcase,” the self-explanatorily titled “Wap Doowap,” or the analog kick/garage band rush of “Non.” While Electronicat’s Fred Bigot, like so many others, hits upon an electro-driven template, he still manages to do so with a bit of panache. *Voodoo Man*’s bombast is bound to go down well with discriminating punks and mods everywhere. *Yuri Wuensch*

FIGURINE
THE HEARTFELT
March/US/CD

It’s difficult to put Jimmy “Postal Service” Tamborello’s output as one-third of Figurine into proper perspective when *The Heartfelt* was actually released a year before *Give Up*, and around the same time as his grown-up *Life is Full of Possibilities* album (as

Dntel). Figurine tracks are breakup odes for outer space high school students, while Postal Service songs chronicle the unexpected Earth girl rebound. Fans nostalgic for bouncy Europop will find much to love on this reissue. Those looking for a headier mix of beats will enjoy IDM-esque nibbles of electro and micro-house alongside a fairly constant drip of sugar and retro kitsch. *Liz Cordingley*

FOUR TET
EVERYTHING ECSTATIC
Domino/US/CD

Though Kieran Hebden has certainly developed since his first Four Tet record, his work has never strayed far from course. And his new record is no different. *Everything Ecstatic* manages to be unquestionably Four Tet while continuing Kieran Hebden’s steady path towards a cosmic rhythm paradise somewhere that side of the sun. Ecstatic jazz, Krautrock, and hip-hop have always been part of the Four Tet package, but never have drums and bells played such an integral role. Like Madlib collaborating with The Boredoms,

Everything Ecstatic is blunted and keenly searching, featuring some of Hebden’s most compelling pieces thus far. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

JAH CURE
FREEDOM BLUES
VP/US/CD

Plaintive wailer Jah Cure is one of the biggest “conscious” dancehall artists, despite his ongoing incarceration due to a rape charge. This compilation collects some of the best work he cut for various producers before being jailed, plus patchier material clandestinely voiced from behind bars. Standout tracks include the emotive “Songs of Freedom,” the melancholy “Trodding in the Valley,” the uplifting “Dancehall Vibe,” and the chilling “King in the Jungle,” but numbers like “Good Morning Jah Jah” suffer from an unbalanced sound. *Freedom Blues* is a good starting point for those new to Jah Cure, while fans will appreciate having his disparate singles in one package. *David Katz*



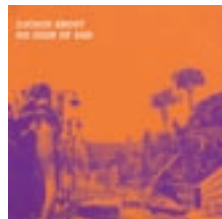
ZION I
TRUE & LIVIN’
Live Up/US/CD

MC Zion and Amp Live emerge from the Bay Area with their most politicized and fully realized record. On this third full-length, the Oakland-based duo honors their city’s activist legacy by pushing to the forefront topics that would make Huey Newton proud. Mixing live instrumentation with samples, Amp Live’s soulful touches enliven a jazz-inflected framework atop which Zion spits lyrical darts at urban ills. Whether speaking on the genocidal nature of gang culture (“Luv”) or the conspicuous consumption of everyday people (“Poems 4 Post Modern Decay”) featuring Aesop Rock), Zion’s vitriol resonates. This is especially so on “Stranger in My Home,” which critiques what Zion I see as the gentrification of hip-hop—a situation where white consumers have encroached upon a historically black and Latino art form. Zion I’s determination to hold down the block should put to rest any notion of a cultural eviction. *James Mayo*



JANE BERZERKER
Paw Tracks/US/CD

Though now thought of as a “folk” group, what has always made Animal Collective so compelling is their appropriation of varied and sundry stylistic approaches. Sheathed within their hazy, shamanistic acoustic world has always been a heartpulse borrowed from Neu! and minimal techno. So it’s no surprise to see AC’s Noah Lennox (a.k.a. Panda Bear) and fellow Other Music employee Scott Mou, known collectively as Jane, make that link more overtly. *Berzerker* is a set of four Valium-fueled, New Age techno tracks recalling Cluster, if not Deuter. If that sounds absurd, it comes off with soul-searching aplomb. *Alexis Georgopoulos*



JAY HAZE
LOVE FOR A STRANGE WORLD
Kitty-Yo/GER/CD

With aliases like the Architect and Dub Surgeon, minimal techno/

house fans may already know him, but technically this is a debut release for Jay Haze. Who are we to judge one’s meds, but rumor has it (actually, a lie) that this electro-soul record was captured live in a k-hole. After getting dumped on “Why Did You Do It,” Haze croons “*I was there for you*”—it’s like Chaka Kahn’s “I Feel For You,” only with desperation rather than romance. In fact, most vocals here are delivered in that harmonized Detroit Grand Pubahs “Sandwiches” style—simultaneously slimy and sexy. *Daniel Siwek*

KILL MEMORY CRASH
AMERICAN AUTOMATIC
Ghostly International/ US/ CD

Set your synths to stun and throw your skinny ties skyward—Kill Memory Crash is here to herald the bastard child of techno and industrial. Unfortunately, the band’s speak in the same cliché, processed voice. Tired monotonous aside, *American Automatic* thrums with energetic dismay, with dark and gleaming digital details pogoing between machine drums. With the rubberband breaks of “Doorway Nine” and slicing manipulations of “Demento” churning around an intriguing slower cut like “Utiu” and the rave flashback keys of “The O,” Kill Memory Crash sells themselves short with their vocal treatment—an all-instrumental version, on the other hand, would be the perfect soundtrack to any crumbling dystopia. *Peter Nicholson*

KOSMA
NEW ASPECTS
Infracom/GER/CD

It’s a cool endeavor to break a cohesive unit into its parts, and then explore the nuances that make the whole unique. If Jazanova is the six-member unit, then Roskow Kretschmann is one of those important parts. *New Aspects*, his first solo album in over seven years, finds Kretschmann (as Kosma) embracing a predominantly mellow downtempo niche that’s both spiritual and uplifting. By no means is this mere background music—*New Aspects* repeatedly drives down the road less traveled, and makes the trip enjoyable. *Velanche*

DJOSOS KROST
NO SIGN OF BAD
Pan Americana/DEN/CD

The loose but small collective that is Djosos Krost is lead by DJ Pharfar and DJ Filip, two style-ists who are equally adept at digital trickery as they are roots sorcery (think Stereotyp, Pole, Deadbeat, etc.). Djosos Krost hails from cold Copenhagen, so you’re not going to find the pressure cooker dub of Kingston, but what you will get is a near masterpiece that vacillates between Burning Spear-like history lessons (Jah Bobby speaks like a Nyabinghi elder) and more *pum pum* power (with Danish dancehall queen Little T) than has ever been heard this side of the North Sea. *Daniel Siwek*

LUCIANO
JAH WORDS
Sanctuary/UK/CD

Jah Words is Jamaican singer Luciano’s 31st album since his 1995 debut. Luciano lyrically crucifies the *shitstem* over one-drop beats, maintains vocal superiority over his peers, and tells us he’s here to save us all: “*Don’t you know I’m here to uplift the human race/Come along and take your place.*” (“Are You With Me”). When not proclaiming himself music’s messiah he’s covering Bob Dylan (“Knockin’ On Heaven’s Door”), and singing R&B-influenced love songs (“Angel Heart”). Still, *Jah Words* is mostly rasta-inspired evangelism—it’s not for nothing that Luciano’s fans call him The Messenger. At least it’s sermonizing you can blaze up to. *Araya Crosskill*

MACKA B
WORD, SOUND & POWER
Jet Star/UK/CD

Produced by Tony “Ruff Cutt” Phillips, a stalwart of the British reggae scene, *Word, Sound & Power* is the first non-Ariva album from Macka B. Mostly he’s in top form, with tracks like the censorious “Mi Noh Bizniz,” language-tracing “Jamaican,” and lamenting “Those Days” delivering important messages with wit and humor; “Deep Bass Voice” even finds him wickedly emulating Barry White. Unfortunately, a few tracks would have benefited from more time in the studio, and “Children Children” falls flat because his kids sing off-key, but the good far outweighs the bad. *David Katz*

MAGIC ARROWS
SWEET HEAVENLY ANGEL OF DEATH
Wobblyhead/US/CD

Perhaps accidentally, Wisconsin producer Magic Arrows (Scott Beschta) has revitalized the unfashionable trip-hop genre. The time’s ripe for a revival, and *Sweet Heavenly Angel Of Death* could be the catalyst—or it could simply work as one of

those albums to which you’ll wanna get buzzed. Opener “Uptown Devils” portends the blissed gist with a stretched “*oohh*” sample (Beach Boys?), an FX’ed blues-rock guitar riff, and a blasé funk rhythm akin to early Howie B. The bulk of *Sweet* is repetitive, but utterly hypnotic, stoned to the bone with no direction home and infusing a sublime ennui with blunted patience. *Dave Segal*

MANDARIN MOVIE
Aesthetics/US/CD

Rob Mazurek (cornetist and more for Chicago Underground Trio and Tigersmilk) has assembled a stellar cast of post-jazzers and noise-rockers for what sounds like a once-in-a-lifetime session. The result: a turbulent psychedelic-jazz classic. *Mandarin Movie* feels like its exceptional players—including guitarist Alan Licht and bassist Matthew Lux—loaded up on the strongest stimulants and cut this cyclotronic free-fusion gem in one take. Aside from sporadic respites of woozy, languorous ambience, *Mandarin Movie* aspires to the level of immortal, chaotic works by Et Cetera, Love Cry Want, and Miles Davis—with a powerful My Bloody Valentine-meets-Metal Machine Music climax. *Dave Segal*

MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO
AT THE CENTER
Thirsty Ear/US/CD

I often miss Meat Beat Manifesto’s ghetto blaster symphonies that fume from the English rustbelt. Nonetheless, Jack Dangers’ experiment with a live modern jazz trio is intriguing as it drops textures and heavy grooves like ink into a glass of water. “Murita Cycles” saunters through Technicolored spy jazz while “Granulation 1” envelops a panicking piano with black-clouded drone. Drummer Dave King’s cadences maintain a narcotic flow (best heard on “Wild”) and flutist Peter Gordon fires melodies like a poet screaming for attention in a crowded pub. Keep those ideas coming, Jack. *Cameron Macdonald*

MED
PUSH COMES TO SHOVE
Stones Throw/US/CD

Since ‘99, MED (a.k.a. Medaphoar) has been slinging’ rhymes from the left coast via countless guest appearances and one-off singles. After six years, Stones Throw proudly presents his debut full-length. Every track is worth the wait. The album cements MED’s brazen intentions to “snatch the game by the throat with a money grip” by way of a punctuated AK-47 flow and head nod board work by J. Dilla, Oh No, Just Blaze, and the ubiquitous Madlib. Aside from four of his previous joints, including “Special” (sans Badu’s vocals), these bangers are guaranteed fresh out the pack and certified sucker free. *Rico “Superbizzee” Washington*

MICE PARADE
BEM-VINDA VONTADE
Bubble Core/US/CD

Adam Pierce is one hardworking s.o.b. In addition to running his lovely Bubble Core label, he plays with and drums for a list of artists too long to fit in this space. One might expect his solo project to be fantastic, and they’d be correct—each song is like a poem, with cadence, meter, and melody intricately linked in a passionate embrace. From the drums-on-top live feel of “Warm Hand in Farmland” to the subtle pulse of “Steady as She Goes” to the indie lounge of “Boat Room,” not a step is missed in Mr. Pierce’s quest for the eternal moment. Find it, love it. *Alexander Posell*

MONOLAKE
POLYGON-CITIES
Imbalance/GER/CD

Without fail, Monolake albums offer cutting-edge sound design and production techniques: any release with Robert Henke’s name on it guarantees *echt* German technology in the service of cavern deep dubby techno in the vaunted Chain Reaction tradition. But Monolake’s sixth album, *Polygon-Cities*, lightens his usual tenebrous approach and even brings in prettily pastoral melodies and amiably chugging beats a la ‘70s synth-meisters Cluster. Henke’s sonic palette is impeccable as always, but a certain predictability is creeping into his approach. While Monolake’s music’s is still more interesting than 98 percent of his peers’, he seems to have plateaued. No matter—Monolake’s plateaus top most artists’ peaks. *Dave Segal*

BEN NEVILLE
JOSEKI
Telegraph/FRA/CD
JAMES TAYLOR
CARTHAGE MILK
Logistic/FRA/CD

Minimal techno keeps getting bigger and badder, but Vancouver, BC’s Ben Neville and England’s James Taylor—one half of electro-house duo Swayzak—keep the reductionist impulse alive on two new albums for Paris’ Logistic camp. Neville’s is the more streamlined of the two, employing understated house and techno rhythms and a pointillist sense of melody in line with recent releases on M_nus. Taylor, in keeping with Swayzak’s pop leanings, stretches out into full-bore songform on a collection that bends straight lines toward the breaking point beneath a prism’s expansive glare. *Philip Sherburne*

ANTHONY NICHOLSON
NECESSARY PHAZES
Trackmode/US/CD

Anthony Nicholson is no relation, but this intricate, intimate album makes me wish I could claim him as kin. Each of these eight songs of nuanced, expansive Afro-house/jazz unfold leisurely, using their six-plus minutes to explore themes, refine rhythms, and blossom in a way impossible within typical pop song structure. While no tracks are flashy in their brilliance, songs like “Thinking of You,” with its hypnotic singing from Ugochi and a casually inventive piano solo from Brian Nichols, reward listeners with subtly beautiful arrange-

ment and performance and would make for gorgeous epiphany on the dancefloor. *Peter Nicholson*

NID & SANCY
TALK TO THE MACHINE
Surprise/BEL/CD

Emerging from the smoky remains of the New Wave/electroclash burnout, Nid and Sancy’s *Talk to the Machine* is an evil kitten stripped of glitz. Sancy demonstrates a hot vocal range throughout the album—the standout track “No Fuck All” sees her giving her best Siouxsie siren wail one moment, then jabbering with Peaches’ fuck-off-and-dance resolve the next. Obvious comparisons to female vocalists aside, the record’s industrial-dance formula succeeds with meticulously dark production and metallic sex appeal. While it shouldn’t seem entirely new to anyone who remembers Nitzer Ebb, *Talk to the Machine* at least gives compelling reason to revisit the sound. *Joe Encarnacion & Anna Balkrishna*

NOBODY
AND EVERYTHING ELSE...
Plug Research/US/CD

Nobody’s latest is an electronic-induced trip, driven by an abnormal palette of sampled sounds and hip-hop-ready drum patterns. As the title suggests, this album features somewhat random selections that may not have completely fit into his first two long-runners. That said, these moody instrumentals are usually as enjoyable as any of his past work. Nobody crafts tranquil downtempo numbers like “Tilijem’s



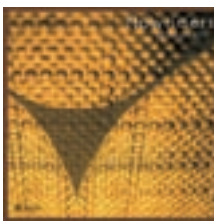
DEADBEAT
NEW WORLD OBSERVER
scape/GER/CD

Although music can often be political, Montreal’s Deadbeat (Scott Monteith) has indisputably succeeded in making politics musical. Embedding each track with a sturdy mix of dub, ambient, and techno elements, he tracks the arc of his personal dissatisfaction with a series of smartly-placed and expertly manipulated samples, a mire of electro static that eventually evolves into a slow-motion sonic battlefield. The definitive moment lies within “Abu Ghraib,” an eight-minute epic that shifts from a sample of abject, inexcusable rhetoric to a taut and textured ambient dub that picks up where last year’s successful *Something Borrowed, Something Blue* left off. Undeniably Deadbeat’s finest moment and one that actually earns its “Mission Accomplished” boast. *Steve Marchese*



STROMBA
THE SITTING ROOM
Fat Cat/UK/CD

Followers of producer Tom Tyler’s musical career will find *The Sitting Room* a rare treat. Teaming up with DC Recordings’ James Dyer, the album revolves around a core of samples built upon by organic layers of drums, tablas, double bass, trumpet, saxophone, trombone, organ, and guitar. The result is a peerless synergy between live musicianship and studio (in fact, “sitting room”) production that is contemporary while at times echoing the beauty of the past: Miles Davis’ horn, the rhythms of Fela Kuti, the arrangements of Bernard Hermann’s later soundtracks. From the bubbling “Camel Spit” to the immense Afro-disco wig out of “Giddy Up,” this is a captivating and satisfying album...and a hell of a journey. *Rob Wood*



Forrest” just as effectively as uptempo offerings, such as the medieval-meets-modern banger “Wake Up And Smell the Millennium.” Of course, depending on your mood, you may be tempted to hit the skip button every now and then. *Max Herman*

**NUDGE
CACHED**

Kranky/US/CD
On their third CD, Portland, OR's Nudge—a loose collective comprised of Jackie O Motherfucker's Honey Owens, Audraglint's Brian Foote, and Paul Dickow (a.k.a. Strategy)—harnesses an impressive range of styles, even for a “post-genre” era like the current one. Combining rock instrumentation with computer editing, Nudge barrels through shoegaze anthems, shimmering organ drones, and ambient circus dub with the facility most bands can't muster for a single one of 'em. Fans of My Bloody Valentine, Fennesz, and Twilight Circus will bless their cut-and-pastin' hearts. *Philip Sherburne*

**OH ASTRO
HELLO WORLD**

Illegal Art/US/CD
Oh Astro's Jane Dove wrote the software with which she produced this six-track exercise in incongruity, and the result is truly among some of the strangest music you may ever hear. The forms and customs of popular music are systematically turned inside-out, dissected, and scattered into the mix like drops of paint off a brush. There is structure here, but it is jarring and somewhat nerve-wracking, as particular melodies and rhythmic patterns are hinted at but never fully explored. Interesting as an intellectual exercise but listenable only to the most open-minded among us. *Alexander Posell*



FLOWRIDERS

**FLOWRIDERS
STARCRAFT**

4 Lux/NETH/CD
You'll have to go back to 4hero's 1999 release *Two Pages* (Talkin' Loud) to find a debut as exciting as this. Started by Hartog Eyesman and Vincent Helbers as a computer-based project, Flowriders has grown into a 10-piece band. Cutting 2 Banks of 4's modal moodiness with Bugz in the Attic's crossover aspirations, they bring on funk jams like “Soul Searchin',” stripped-down, hook-driven singles like “Pheromone,” and blue-eyed soul joints like “Roots Go Deep.” *Starcraft* covers a lot of stylistic territory—and risks losing the plot as it tackles R&B, broken beat, and even flirts with drum & bass—but Flowriders' tight instrumental interplay largely keeps it all together. At 73 minutes long, a few of the lesser tracks (like the meandering “Into Darkness”) could've been left out, but this is an impressive start. *Peter Nicholson*

**THE PACIFICS
SUNDAY'S CHICKEN**

All Natural/US/CD
Though Chicago hip-hop trio The Pacifics brandishes an unwieldy acronym (People Accumulating Creative Ideas Foregoing Ignorant Conclusions of Society), they still manage come across as neighborhood types trading rhymes on the stoop. KP, Strike3, and Norman Rockwell just want to give you some food for thought. Like similar Windy City crews All Natural and Typical Cats, they bring an up-with-people vibe and diss the bling and booze mainstream. It's nothing that hasn't been done many times before, but just like the fried chicken on the album cover, this music is comfort food for classic hip-hop fans. *Patrick Sisson*

**WILLIAM PARKER
LUC'S LANTERN**

Thirsty Ear/US/CD
Savoy Jazz/US/CD
After employing their chops in the service of hip-hop, Iyer and Parker have both released straightforward jazz albums. Iyer frequently collaborates with rapper Mike Ladd and wrote his cognitive science doctoral dissertation on breakbeats. His forlorn piano is offset by a tight rhythm section utilizing Latin and New Orleans beats, but the alto sax work is shrill and easy listening-esque: a total buzz kill. Thirty years in, Parker has played with Anti-Pop Consortium, John Zorn, DJ Spooky, Yo La Tengo, and innumerable free jazz greats. *Luc's Lantern* isn't groundbreaking but it's solid, emotional, visceral work. *Ben Bush*

**PARLOUR
HIVES FIVES**

Howard Hello
Howard Hello EP
Temporary Residence/US/CD
Perhaps no other American label has done more to endorse the often-overlooked world of instrumental post-rock than Brooklyn's Temporary Residence. Their two newest releases—again predominantly instrumental but not entirely post-rock—show of the moody genre's immediate successes and historically cited shortcomings. As proof of the former, Howard Hello's new four-track EP brims with blissful, springtime pop structures patiently looped and expanded over the course of its 20-plus minutes. The same can't be said for Parlour's newest EP, *Hives Fives*, which ditches the electronics for a more organic approach but never seems to recapture the energy of their more captivating *Octopus Off-Broadway* and *Googler* releases. *Steve Marchese*

**PHONEHEADS
BUDDY LANGUAGE**

Buddy/GER/LP
Newsflash: in Europe, they make videos for drum & bass songs. I know! It's fitting that they shot one for “Roll That Stone,” when you consider this double disc's crossover pretensions. Philipp Maiburg and Michael Scheibenreite make up Phoneheads; their style is in the realm of EZ Rollers, Hospital Records, and even Good Looking but they mix up tempos while striving to make an “album” for the electronica masses. By focusing on getting continental cred, they've forgotten that—in the States at least—vocal lines like “*Doin the do*” just won't do. *Daniel Siwek*

**PLATINUM PIED PIPERS
TRIPLE P**

Ubiquity/US/CD
The shuffling, one-two beat that dominates *Triple P* pumps like a piston, with sparks flying after every stroke. It's a fitting focus for the Piper production duo of Wajeed and Saadiq, both Detroit natives. Their debut has been hailed as an example of next-level soul, but this vital and varied album works best when it remixes the past. “Now or Never” sizzles with a combination of double-dutch handclaps and soulful singing. The sexy R&B song “Fever” starts out like an Usher joint, but soon the joyful singing perfectly channels early Michael Jackson. If only other producers followed the Pipers' lead. *Patrick Sisson*

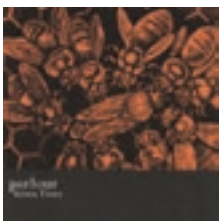
**QUASIMOTO
THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF LORD QUAS**

Stones Throw/US/CD
Madlib's helium-voiced Quasimoto persona seems more like schtick than genius the second time around, but the sheer musicality and density of ideas on *Lord Quas* is worthy of the highest praise. Mystifyingly thick amounts of source material fly by as homies 'Lib and Quas chat and argue with some of them (like a drunken Melvin Van Peebles) but the ADD-addled stream of information also passes by so quickly that it's



AFU-R
★ STATE OF THE ARTS ★

THE NEW ALBUM IN STORES JUNE 14TH
FEATURES: DJ PREMIER ★ MASTA KILLA (WU-TANG)
ROYCE DA 5'9" ★ KARDINAL OFFISHALL
PF CUTTIN ★ GENTLEMAN AND OTHERS



hard for even the most seasoned listener to take it all in. Which is sort of the point. Fortunately, Quas is also there to save the day with his unmissable nuggets of insight ("Trying to find a better way to cook Top Ramen but there ain't one"). *Jesse Serwer*

R-H
BLACKASIA VOLUME 1

Black Asia/SING/CD
Singapore-based DJ and producer Rajesh Hardwani has a vision of a pan-Asian massive united by a shared passion for ethnic sounds infused into progressive beats. *Black Asia Volume 1* is the culmination of Hardwani's philosophizing: a heaping scoop of field recordings from his own travels, everything from Japanese string masters to Malaysian street musicians layered in breakbeat and drum & bass. When it works, like on "Tim Sum Vindaloo," *Black Asia* is decent latter-day Asian Underground stuff, but too often, r-H is content to stay ho-hum generic. *Justin Hopper*

THE RUSSIAN FUTURISTS
OUR THICKNESS

Upper Class/CAN/CD
Canadian Matthew Adam Hart (a.k.a. The Russian Futurists) comes from a proud lineage of monomaniacal, solitary pop geniuses, locked in their bedrooms cranking out unique and perfect hooks. Like his forebears—Andy Partridge, Brian Wilson, Stephin Merritt—Hart seems to have a bottomless barrel of sing-a-longs like "Hurtin' 4 Certain" and "Paul Simon," which set face-in-hands lyrics against sunny day psych tunes. Hart's songs come crammed through with cheap synths and crackling drum machines, helping make his third album, *Our Thickness*, one of the more subtle revolutions in classic pop's recent history. *Justin Hopper*

SILICONE SOUL
STARING INTO SPACE

Soma/SCOT/CD
Scotland's mighty Soma imprint delivers yet again: former Slam protégés and overwhelming club faves Silicone Soul keenly display their forte for production, delivering elegant, driving deep house that plows through any dancefloor. Their stunning opener "When The Devil Drives" strongly recalls the sexy warmth of vintage Laurent Garnier; the remaining tracks feel distinctive and vibrant, pulsing with gleaming funk lines and an exceptionally tight rhythmic command. Enjoy shivers of tech-house delight on "Under A Werewolf Moon," which quivers note by note up your spine. *Janet Tzou*

SLEATER-KINNEY
THE WOODS

Sub Pop/US/CD
The greatest rock band of the hip-hop generation and the least cynical, too, these three Portland guitar-and-rhythm geniuses add Led Zep samples (ariatic vocal runs, interminable Bonham drumming, knock 'em over solos) and annex their own space in rock iconography. Nobody could do it better: their triple vocals, warbles, and hazy jams run on love whilst dropping classic ideas into the current epoch. *The Woods* is more overtly pop than their last six albums, they croon and seethe about pop culture ("Modern Girl," "Entertain") and sensualize their own power ("The Fox," "Let's Call It Love"). *Julianne Shepherd*

SOUL MEKANIK
EIGHTY-ONE

Rip/UK/CD
Mechanics Danny Spencer and Kelvin Andrews perform a complete overhaul of house on *Eighty-One*, tearing down the form to its barest 4/4 essentials and building a completely new vehicle ready to jack your body. Though they work from a full-flavor tech-house frame, a given tune is as likely to be laced with classic diva vox as vocodered French, as likely to be flooded with disco guitar scratch as electro gurgles, as likely to be rife with acid squiggles as iconic hi-hats. *Eighty-One* doesn't reinvent the house wheel, but it does slap on a shiny new paint job and some spinning rims. *Rob Geary*

TOSCA
J.A.C.

G-Stone-1K7/GER/CD
Dedicated to their three bouncing baby boys fathered since *Dehli9*, you'd expect Tosca to sound impotent on *J.A.C.* After all, this is music for playboys; well... them and Jil Sander boutiques. But have no fear, fatherhood has not tamed the sumptuous stylings of Vienna's Huber & Dorfmeister. The most marked difference on *J.A.C.* (named for babies Joshua, Arthur, and Conrad) is a new full-piece band: the familiar dub-soaked swirls are there, but expanded far beyond the programmed beats of yore. The dangerous electric bass on "Sala" will sate longtime Tosca and K&D aficionados alike, but it's the lavish piano tricklings and curiously uptempo rhythm on "Züri" that truly show you who's daddy. *Carleton Curtis*

T.P. ORCHESTRE POLY-RHYTHMO
THE KINGS OF BENIN: URBAN GROOVE 1972-1980

Soundway/UK/CD
Unlike the continent's rapidly depleting natural resources, there seems to be no end to Africa's stash of excellent, unheard funk recordings. Rare African funk compilations have been streaming west since Antibalas and MCAs Fela reissues helped launch Afrobeat's second wave, and the fruits often make the listener wonder why this stuff never got here the first time around. *The Kings of Benin* is one such release, consisting of the formative recordings of the still-active 16-piece T.P. Orchestre. While lengthy, hypnotic, Fela-esque tunes like "Ne Te Faches Pas" and "Aihe Ni Kpe We" are typical of this release, the psych-flavored "Hwe Towe Hun" should stand out as one of the best songs you've never heard. *Jesse Serwer*

ZIMBABWE LEGIT
BROTHERS FROM THE MOTHER

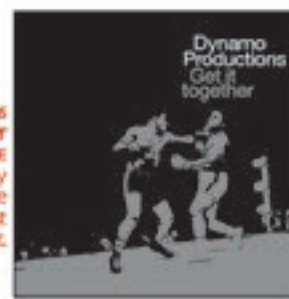
Glow-In-The-Dark/US/CD
Zimbabwean brothers Dumisani and Akim Ndlovu arrived in America in 1990 as fully formed masters of the mic. They rapped with an odd mixture of Das EFX's swift-tongued playfulness and Last Poets' emphatic radical stringency. Their conscious pro-African lyrics ricocheted against some of the chunkiest and funkier beats being laid down during rap's golden age. *Brothers From The Mother* collates tracks Zimbabwe Legit originally cut shortly after hitting the States, but which have mostly remained unheard save for a 1992 EP issued by Hollywood Basic. *Brothers* stands up to era classics like Dream Warriors' *And Now The Legacy Begins* and Brand Nubian's *One For All*. *Dave Segal*

Armin Van Buuren
State of Trance 2005
Ultra
Armin Van Buuren once again defines the State of Trance for 2005.



Crystal Method
Community Service 2
Ultra
Crystal Method returns with a mix album featuring a new track and 3 new remixes.

Dynamo Productions
Get It Together
Unique
Dynamo Productions (Andy Smith & Scott Hendy) are back with their second artist album vs. classic remix project.



Eddy Merckx
Yannah
Just Like...
Covers record
Mediterranean broken beats, soul, jazz, fusion, Brazilian and techy sounds from this fresh new duo.



Noiseshaper
Rough Out There
Sounds from the Roof
A collection of timeless dubby reggae downbeat music with tight grooves perfect for the dancefloor.



Public Enemy
The First Single
Curtis Hold Us Back
Guerilla Funk
The first single featuring Paris & Dead Prez from "The Birth of a Nation" coming August 9th.



Legacy
Project Mayhem 6 Hole
Taking us back to the era where rappers were leaders of originality and creativity.



Jamie Lidell
Multiply
Warp
A British soul vocalist beyond your wildest imagination, Jamie Lidell has crafted a twisted R&B album with all the hallmarks of a vintage classic. *Multiply* is a refreshingly modern update done in inimitable Jamie Lidell style.



Raven Big Pooh
Just Friends 6 Hole
Second single from Rapper Big Pooh's solo debut *Sleepers on 6 Hole*. Records/Hall of Justice.



DA BEATMINERZ
FULLY LOADED W/STATIK

Copter/US/CD
Since the early '90s, hip-hop producers Da Beatminerz have been the proud purveyors of the rugged and raw, often lacing it with unforgettable jazz loops (e.g. Black Moon's classic "Who Got Da Props"). But with their sophomore album, *Fully Loaded W/Statik*, brothers DJ Evil Dee and Mr. Walt have stripped down their sound even further to the core, leaving any haunting samples at the door. A variety of MCs, from legend KRS-ONE to emerging talent Jean Grae, are brought aboard to spit over bare bones, yet speaker shaking, boom bap. Despite a couple of sloppily produced tracks, standouts like the reggae-flavored "Mafia Don" (featuring Philly's ever-imposing The Last Emperor) help maintain Da Beatminerz' rep for producing greatness. With this release, these two crate diggers prove that sometimes taking things back to basics is the best way to go. *Max Herman*

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The Away Team
National Anthem
6 Hole
Sean Boog and K-RYSIS craft hard-hitting Hip-Hop featuring Smif-N-Wessun, Rapper Big Pooh & Phonte.



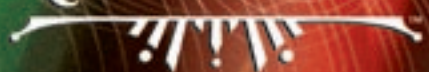
Vicious Acres
Brazilian Beats 6
Mr. Bongo
The legendary Mr Bongo Records returns with the funkiest installment yet in the Brazilian Beats series. Volume 6 is bursting with no butt-shaking, genre-crossing mind-expanding sounds - hot percussion, soulful vocals, and rooty organic touches!



Vicious Acres
Ultra Weekend
Ultra
Ultra presents the soiest summer dance tracks - this is the soundtrack to your weekend!

SOLARIUM DELIRIUM

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL



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COMP REVIEWS

**FUTURE SOUNDS OF
JAZZ VOLUME 10**
Compost/GER/CD



**10 YEARS ON, CAN
GERMAN ELETRJAZZ
LABEL COMPOST
CONTINUE TO EVOLVE?**

Don't call it a comeback, Compost's been here for days. But after a few relatively fallow years—and a string of forgettable releases that lacked balls—the Munich-based downtempo headquarters is kicking ass again. Following return to form marked by the release of Mustang's seriously banging *Back Home* album last fall, label head Michael Reinboth celebrates the tenth edition of his *Future Jazz* series with a collection of wildly varied but perfectly matched songs—all have mucho *cojones*.

As if signifying where the series has been and where it's headed, *FSQJ 10* kicks off with the mellifluous, melodic opening piano runs of "Elevate" by Fred Everything featuring The New Mastersounds. But, since this is a Maurice Fulton remix, the track is soon overrun by squirming keys and one of those basslines—the ones that make you go "mmm-yeah!" Rather than continuing immediately onto the main room dancefloor as a lesser curator might, Reinboth meanders left into darker, drummer Moonstarr territory, with the Canadian producer's epic take on Povo's "Uam Uam." This in turn dissolves into a burping, percolating "Fools Garden (Black Conga)" by none other than Ricardo Villalobos.

What is the Perlon and Playhouse techno perpetrator doing on a Compost *FSQJ* compilation? The same could be asked of Hot Chip's sleazy, electro-on-Nyquil "Playboy" or Syclop's "Fairlight Sunrise" (Maurice Fulton again in his Italo-disco guise) but Reinboth makes it work, dropping "Fairlight Sunrise"'s bouncing bass strings and crisp kit drums expertly into the wooden low-end of Gabriel Ananda's "Suessholz" (as

interpreted by Ben Mono).

In fact, when "Suessholz" really begins to take off its brashly synthetic melody is eerily in sync with the Syclops track, almost a continuation of the same theme. Although this is an unmixed compilation, there are several places when you will not notice the end of one track and the beginning of another, no small feat for songs that are much more than anonymous DJ tools.

Future Sounds of Jazz 10 definitely emphasizes the future more than the jazz, but it does swing back towards traditional Compost territory on the final four tracks, beginning with the swinging drum loops of Origami and then Reinboth's remix of Cal Tjader's "Los Bandidos." Reinboth's version starts out faithful to the original but slowly mutates from a somewhat tepid conga, piano, and vibes chill session into a driving jam with acidic keys, a thumping kick, and a crazy, whistling high end that always makes me think my phone is ringing in another room. "Los Bandidos," indeed! As an added bonus, CD buyers get the General Electrics digital exclusive "Terms And Conditions." Just as Reinboth ambushes the Tjader tune and tweaks it to his reality, *FSQJ 10* hijacks our expectations for Compost, showing they've got a lot more in their percolator than coffeehouse-ready nu-jazz. *Peter Nicholson*



EROL ALKAN

EROL ALKAN: A BUGGED OUT MIX/A BUGGED IN MIX

Resist/UK/2CD

Bugged In is an early hours trip through the diverse tastes of Erol Alkan, a resident of London's super fashion-conscious indie-meets-dance night Trash. On the first disc, Scandinavians The Concretes provide an indie-folk take on The Stones' "Miss You," whilst Campag Velocet's wonderful "Obsessed By The Gloom" warms up for a sweet cover of Ride's "Vapour Trail" by Trespassers William. The mood switches on the *Bugged Out* mix, demonstrating that Alkan's more than *au fait* with cutting-edge electro-house. Roman Flügel's spanking "Geht's Noch?," DJ T.'s essential "Time Out," and Alkan's own edit of Alter Ego's loud masterpiece "Rocker" are amongst many fine and warped moments. Sensational. *Rob Wood*

and spoken vocals—doesn't even have that much. And "Dingo" from Tiger Stripes has seen better incarnations elsewhere. With tracks like the laidback "Malombo" from Mahoota, this album isn't bad at all—just a bit misnamed. *Luciana Lopez*

ATLANTIQUITY

Atlantic-Rhino/US/CD
Compiled by Garth Trinidad of "Chocolate City" (KCRW) radio fame, *Atlantiquity* places soulful jewels from the Atlantic Records vaults in the hands of a varied group of remixers, from Vikter Duplaix to Jurassic Five turntablist DJ Nu-Mark. (Despite the appearance of SA-RA Creative Partners and the Platinum Pied Pipers, who bring heat on Kleer's "Tonight" and Faze-O's "Riding High," respectively, it does not have anything to do with Ubiquity Records). The results are a predictably mixed bag, from Kev Brown's masterfully subtle take on The Spinners' "I'll Be Around" to a rather uninspiring revamp of Yusef Lateef's "Nubian Lady" by Metisse (Trinidad with partner Mr. French). *Jesse Server*

BILL LASWELL PRESENTS: TROJAN DUB MASSIVE VOL. 1 AND VOL.2

Sanctuary/UK/CD
Bill Laswell's shapeshifting career—as a label chief, performer, and legendary producer—has never been anything less than broad ranging and masterful. With a discography that begins in the '70s, and shows no signs of slowing, Laswell's latest endeavor is a reinterpretation of choice selections from Trojan Records' legendary archives. Laswell reconstructs the treasured recordings of King Tubby, The Upsetters, Prince Jammy, Augustus Pablo, Gregory Isaacs' All Stars, and a slew of other dub reggae icons. With consistency as his forte, Bill Laswell's latest offering reflects his status as a fearless musician who prolifically tackles projects that most producers wouldn't dare touch—and probably couldn't even if they wanted to. *David Ma*

BLACKLABEL AMSTERDAM

BlackLabel/NETH/CD
You would be lucky to find fans of disparate labels such as Gomma and Direct Beat in the same club, let alone buying the same records. But somehow Holland's BlackLabel have managed to achieve just that. The fantastic, wide-ranging tastes of Dutch DJ and label-boss Kid Goesting are showcased perfectly on this first compilation CD, where '80s electro-pop imitations (such as Roko Dragonbreath's "Jumpin 2 Conclusions" make perfect sense next to darker, more purist wares such as Deflektor's "Electrobazz." *Dave Stenton*

BROTHERS ON THE SLIDE: THE STORY OF UK FUNK

Discotheque-Sanctuary/UK/CD
Just when you thought England was funk impaired, Discotheque shuttles in 18 juggernauts to blow your wig and change your mind. Importing musical cues from stateside pioneers, the groups here stir in their native African and Caribbean influences for flavor. The set mixes usual suspects like Cymande, Labi Siffre, and Average White Band with more obscure outfits such as Black Velvet and The Equals. Replete with liner notes, interviews, photos, and a gang of gnarly funk, this is a must for collectors and connoisseurs of groove. Star cut: Madeline Bell's rare gator funk jam "Comin' Atcha," produced by Led Zeppelin bassist John-Paul Jones. *Rico "Superbizzee" Washington*

CAMPING

BPitch Control/GER/CD
On "When Will I Be Famous," Sasha Funke somehow finds a plosive "b" in "famous," lets the sample ricochet, and builds a hook out of it. It's the catchiest thing I've ever heard. And Ellen Allien's "Wish"—with its odd rhythm, plaintive guitar line, and trite but endearing lyrics about petroleum wars—is strangely awesome. But the rest of the material here is relatively straightforward, mostly repetitive tracks with large, club-tweaked production. Funke and Allien come out of this looking pretty good; might as well pick up their albums instead of wading through *Camping* for a couple good songs. *Ben Bush*

DJ RAP: BULLETPROOF

System/US/CD
As a wee one, Charissa Saverio hit the ivories hard and bounced around the globe with her folks. She might have become a barrister if it weren't for raves. Since then, DJ Rap's been a drum & bass mainstay (considered the world's number-one female DJ) as well as Proper Talent label maven. Following 1999's monstrous *Learning Curve*, The First Lady of Jungle's latest fuller makes its own name. Six originals, two remixes (of Ferry Corsten and Erick Morillo), plus two faves by Konflikt and Concord Dawn pack the disc, which races along at a slamming tempo. Her sprayed-on outfit on the cover won't hurt sales either. *Stacy Meyn*

DJ PREMIER & MR. THING PRESENT: THE KINGS OF HIP HOP

Rapster-BBE/UK/CD
The third installment in BBE's ongoing *Kings* series might leave a few heads scratching. DJ Premier's half of this two-disc set isn't full of fat beats, but rather classic soul he feels helped shape the genre. What's odd are the selections—a mostly mellow, breakbeat-free set of standards that hardly qualify as obscure, from Nina Simone's "Don't Explain" to Wilson Pickett's "In The Midnight Hour." On the flip, former Scratch Pervert Mr. Thing takes us through a list of mostly early '90s East Coast hip-hop classics. Selections like EPMD's "Rampage" and ODB's "Shimmy Shimmy Ya" seem a little too obvious: for the money it feels like there should be at least a few we haven't heard in a while. *Jesse Server*

DJ SNEAK: HOUSE OF OM

Om/US/CD
DJ Sneak's excellent mixing and on-point programming create what sometimes seems so rare: a house album that you can't pigeonhole. Part of a new mix series on Om, this album gives Sneak the chance to show off mixing so smooth the disc sounds almost organic. The heavy use of syncopation among the selections, like Lil' Mark's "Life Is A Dream," means these tracks don't just rely on a thumping 4/4 to keep one's interest. Other numbers—like Lawnchair Generals' "You Got to Go," with sexy-but-not-oversexed female vocals—succeed just as well. Sneak's still sneaky, making sure the mix never loses its sense of fun. *Luciana Lopez*

FAX COLLABORATIONS AND REMIXES

Static Discos/MEX/CD
Electronics know no borders, so it should be no surprise that Ruben Tamayo calls Mexicali, Mexico home. Tamayo assembles engaging, mostly minimal techno, with rolling dub basslines weaving in and out of the programmer's dithering, clicking rhythms. For *FAX Collaborations and Remixes*, Tamayo calls on allies from across the globe. Vocal tracks with Alex Ayuli and Pepito comprise a modern glitch-ified take on synth pop, while Jonas Bering and Tamayo create hypnotic cross-continental microdisco that sonar pings its way across the Atlantic. There are a few boring collaborations here (Murcof's post-Pole dub drags), but otherwise this is a testament to the good kind of globalism. *Rob Geary*

GET UP STAND UP—JAMAICAN PROTEST SONGS

Ras/US/CD
Jamaican music has a long history of rebelliousness. In fact, much of the island's popular culture has always involved resistance—Jamaica is historically one of the most defiant nations in the world. Thematically, this introductory compilation mostly re-treads well-worn ground: Marley proclaims himself a "Soul Rebel," Dennis Brown demands "Revolution," Black Uhuru salutes "Solidarity" while Beres Hammond is "Putting Up Resistance." Surprisingly enough, newer tracks such as Bushman's deadpan take of John Lennon's "Working Class Hero" and Yvad's adaptation of Buffy St. Marie's "The Universal Soldier" actually add to the set's appeal. *David Katz*

GILLES PETERSON IN AFRICA

Ether/UK/CD
Just who does Gilles Peterson think he is? First he "discovers" Brazil on ... *In Brazil*, now *he's* going to teach us about the Dark Continent, despite the trend toward all sounds Afrique? Well, damn if he doesn't do just that. In Peterson's curatorial hands, Fela and Miriam Makeba sound as fresh as current faves like Antibalas on disc one ("The Soul" disc). Likewise, on disc two ("The Spirit" disc), deep and Afro house producers (MAV, Dennis Ferrer) and techy and broken beat remixers (Carl Craig, IG Culture) all sound as spiritually ancient as their forefathers. *Justin Hopper*

IDJUT BOYS: PRESS PLAY

Tirk/UK/CD
The Idjut Boys are often seen as the DJ's DJs in much the same way as Harvey is—and Harvey's a DJ whose musical footsteps they clearly follow in. Compiled exclusively from their own re-edits, this collection shines with inspiring choices from dance music's past and present. The modern electronic boogie of Lindstrom & Prins Thomas sits next to Kitty Grant's well-pitched cover of Chas Kankel's "Glad To Know You." Etta James' fantastic "All The Way Down" synchs into Plantlife's cosmic Prince-isms on "Love Me Till It Hurts." A truly glorious selection. *Rob Wood*

INTRICATE MAXIMALS

Audiobulb/UK/CD
Drawing on their diverse roster, Audiobulb's latest compilation showcases a range of experimental electronic music from the most ambient of string epics to the glitchiest error fest. Those familiar with previous 'Bulb releases will find the continuing explorations here diverse enough to maintain interest, yet holding to the label's investigative

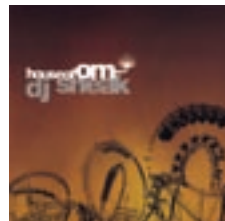
thematic focus. Standouts include Taavi Tulev's "Tühkli," a haunting and rhythmically charged exploration of cavernous melody, and Oti's "Little Tummies," a Vangelis-inspired string-and-atmospheric opus that closes out the compilation in fine style. A fine addition to this excellent label's growing and innovative catalog. *Alexander Posell*

JEREMY P. CAULFIELD: DETACHED [05]

Dumb-Unit/GER/CD
Toronto producer/DJ Jeremy P. Caulfield's mix moves minimal techno further from the iPods of unkempt IDM-ers and squarely onto the dancefloor, employing low-passed analog worbles, opiate synth lines, and syncopated clicks. The mix reaches moments of subtle climax with the bassline whomp of "Psycho Happiness" and the vocal hook of "Truthology," only to settle back into comfortable chug-a-long tech house, avoiding risk or reason to rant to your mates. Droning hypnosis may be the point of it all, but if Caulfield and other proponents of this heady genre want to maintain dancefloor interest, they would do well to add some range to their material. *Joe Encarnacion*

KING BRITT PRESENTS JAZZMENTAL

Slip'n' Slide/UK/CD
At first glance, this collection of broken jazz joints seems a bit underwhelming—a two-year old Ennio Morricone remix and two cuts out of 12 from the same artist don't bode well—but Philly don King Britt delivers in the end. Aside from the expected (Bugz's sing-a-long anthem "Booty La La" and a super-smooth Basement Boys re-rub of Fertile Ground's "Living in the Light"), King comes correct with lesser known gems, including a rattling rap from Jneiro Jarel and Champion Soul plus "Our Time," his own superb soul excursion with Lizz Fields. *Peter Nicholson*



DJ EINSTEIN & SOUP

IMPEACH THE PRECEDENT

Kajmere Sound/US/CD
With G.W.B. still calling the shots and war raging overseas, the time is ripe for some quality protest music. On this 16-track comp, we get a wide variety of jams from mostly Cali artists, with very few dull moments in the mix. Thes One and J-Live team up for the Mother Earth dedication "Give It Up," The Globetrotters show "Love," and Jazzanova delivers a finely chopped but ridiculously smooth instrumental joint. Other winners come from PUTS, DJ Einstein & Soup, and Crown City Rockers, while retro heads Poets of Rhythm, Breakstra, and Sharon Jones bring the live action. Smart but never boring, *Impeach The Precedent* proves that "political/conscious" music can still get funky. *Brolin Winning*



LEE PERRY: I AM THE UPSETTER—LEE "SCRATCH" PERRY GOLDEN YEARS

Sanctuary/UK/4CD

I can guess what you're thinking: do we really need another Perry compilation? The answer may be yes, because this box set does an admirable job of tracing the artistic progression of Perry's "golden years." Disc one has Perry venturing out on his own in the late 1960s, disc two sees adventurous experimentation with King Tubby, and disc three brings us to the heart of his legendary Black Ark studio; best of all is disc four, with dub and instrumental abstractions. The accompanying 48-page booklet also looks good, despite grammatical errors and a few misinformed assertions that form minor stumbling blocks. *David Katz*



MEADOW: COTTAGE INDUSTRIES FOUR

Neo Ouija/UK/CD

Neo Ouija enhances the living room aerospace once again with their most colorful *Cottage Industries* compilation thus far. Fifteen contributing artists, including veterans Xela, Sense, and Seven Ark, address the delicate fusion of acoustics and electronics as they make way as for a host of fresh talent. Julien Neto's nanobotic programming on "Shiney Eyed Gal" and the disarmingly subtle rhythm mechanics of Maps and Diagrams' "Twitchel" offset the rich, thermal optic ambience of Cepia and The Open Directory Project. *Meadow* focuses on the human element in an artificial world, bringing ardent acoustic performance and digital aesthetics together with seamless grace. *Doug Morton*



REVIVE THE SOUL SOUL SAUCE

Revive the Soul/US/2CD

Look past the obvious "boutique hotel set" marketing maneuvers—slick packaging and hokey, pseudo-holistic titles—and you have one hell of a pair of downtempo primers on your hands. While some DJs and most headz would be quick to distance themselves from a label tied to compilations like *Pure Trance Party!* and *Work This! 2005*, the two-disc sets *Revive The Soul* and *Soul Sauce* are expertly curated and display the wide swathe of electronica heard on online and college radio shows (and unfortunately less present in live DJ sets). With Four Tet sitting amicably alongside Dr. Rubberfunk, and The Herbaliser sharing space with Lali Puna, the Revive the Soul label has succeeded where others were too cool to tread. *Steve Marchese*

RIPLEY: ICH BIN DEFEKT

DeathSucker/UK/CD

This gem offers a truly outrageous mix of gabba, noise core, soul, dancehall, hip-hop, and any other kind of break or sonic transmission imaginable. The title may be German, but DJ Ripley mixed her barrage of brash in Brooklyn, and it's got much more humor than expected. You've never heard Bootsy Collins/NWA ("I Wanna Be/Fuck With You") versioned over riddims, nor have you heard Steve Miller's "Jungle Love" become junglist love, backed by BPMs you'd swear exceed 180. *Daniel Siwek*

SOUL GOSPEL

Soul Jazz/ UK/CD

The hallowed genre of gospel is the foundation for all subsequent forms of black music, but its image is far less hip than its secular progeny. However, *Soul Gospel* is a complete revelation—18 statements of sanctified soul and sho 'nuff spirited funk—starting with Clarence Smith's goosebump-raising take on the traditional Negro spiritual, "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child." Marquee names like Aretha Franklin, the Staples Singers, and Bobby Bland all contribute solid material, as do lesser-known (but no less talented) messengers like Sons of Truth, Voices of East Harlem, and Kim Weston. By the time Della Reese kicks in to "Compared to What," you'll be reaching for your "Jesus Made Me Funky" t-shirt and praising the almighty groove. Amen! *Eric K. Arnold*

TANGO FUSION CLUB

Tango-go/GER/CD

This disc isn't the first to fuse tango and electronic music, but the idea is still new enough to sound fresh. The merging of accordion and strings with synths and beats makes for a (slightly limited) house-leaning collection that recasts the passion of the Argentine tango in a club-friendly format. "Ultimatum" from Saul Cosentino mixes a fat bass and accordion, while "Bandoneon Acorazado" from Zeldia + Sonja features heady vocals and a heavy, pulsing beat. This album isn't the first of its kind, and with tango blending so well with other genres it definitely won't be the last. *Luciana Lopez*

TIME MACHINE: TM RADIO

Glow-in-the-Dark/CD/US

Somewhere between a radio show appearance and a mixtape falls Time Machine's *TM Radio*. In case you missed it, Time Machine is a trio of hip-hop Golden Age revivalists who dropped the fun debut *Slow Your Roll* last year. For a follow-up, Time Machine mixes some new tracks of their own together with exclusives from Crown City Rockers, Edo G, Celph Titled, and others. The selections stick mainly to the "1993 Forever" aesthetic, with straightforward loop-based beats, appealing, summery hooks, and storytelling lyrics that favor punchlines over malice. *Rob Geary*

WASTED

CockRockDisco-Mirex/GER/CD

My most bitter prejudice speculates that the breakcore spazes at the Wasted Festival in Berlin clicked their laptops to an audience of statues. Jason Forrest (formerly Donna Summer) and Pure organized the Feb. '05 event and, as this comp's performers attest, breakcore too convoluted and art-damaged for the dancefloor is still a rerun worth taping. Repeater's "Dyslexic Funky Droid" trash-compacts JB's funk and leaves blood all over the walls. Forrest does his usual shtick of jumping from stoopid hip-hop to smattered jungle to meth-addled prog. Drop the Lime attains a groove that takes several listens to digest. *Wasted* is either noisenik bliss or sonic repellant for meat-market clubs. *Cameron Macdonald*



SLY AND ROBBIE'S TAXI SOUND

Auralux/UK/CD

This collection selects prime tracks from the late '70s/early '80s, showcasing Lowell Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare in prime form. Classic cuts by Sugar Minott, Black Uhuru, and Gregory Isaacs make this set solid. What makes it exceptional, however, is Ini Kamoze's "World A Music," a stellar dubbed cut later sampled by Damian Marley for his "Welcome to Jamrock," and an eight-minute reworking of The Undisputed Truth's "Smiling Faces" by The Tamlins. And if these serious grooves aren't enough to draw you in, Sly & Robbie's quirky take on Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" should do the trick. *Derek Beres*

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TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: JEREMY P. CAULFIELD

Oh, Canada! The Maple Leaf techno connection continues apace and Toronto-bred Jeremy P. Caulfield—proprietor of the four-year-old techno label Dumb-Unit—is more than happy to show those Germans how it’s done. Along with the likes of Richie Hawtin and Sheldon “Pan/Tone” Thompson, Caulfield is one of the many North Americans to move operations to Berlin, where his rocky and tough tunes and DJ sets are revitalizing minimal techno dancefloors. If you’ve picked up his releases for Trapez and WMF you know the score; if not, his new mix CD, *Detached* (Dumb-Unit), is a rubbery introduction, featuring expertly blended bleeps and bleeps by the likes of Metope, Alex Smoke, Wighnomy Brothers, and John Tejada. We cornered Caulfield, and asked him all *about* minimal techno. *Saffron Reeves*
www.dumb-unit.com

MATHIAS KADEN CIRCLE PIT EP Vakant/GER/12
Mathias Kaden—the 24-year-old DJ, producer, and resident of the excellent Muna club in East Germany—launches three distinct micro bombs for our listening enjoyment. A well-tuned and energetic EP with its own distinctive appeal, Circle Pit delves deep into sound planes of bubbly basslines, low-fi drum cuts, and warm “hypnotic” grooves that will penetrate the darkest club floors. *JC*

SHYZA MINELLI NASTY Sub-static/GER/12
A fun, slightly obnoxious release from Shyza Minelli, who comes across as a mix between Captain Comatose, Detroit Grand Pubahs, and Steve Bug. The original is a twisted, energetic romp but you might be more inclined to head for the B-side. The real rudeness occurs as Cologne’s MIA turns in a dark, stylish, and sinister tech-house remix that is one of her best pieces to date. *JC*

ZIGGY KINDER VIEL BASS & WENIG HUND Ware/GER/12
Ziggy Kinder is back with an EP that translates to “lots of bass and little dog.” Coincidentally, that’s also the name of the A-side, which is as airy and funky as his previous releases. Ziggy has a great ear for getting his drum fills, edits, and overall syncopation just right. *JC*

BRUNO PRONSATO WUORINEN
Orac/US/12
Pacific Northwesterer Pronso’s minimal techno owes as much to the traditions of Stockhausen and Cage as it does Herbert and Hawtin. His tracks unleash strange noises arranged in no particular logical order, but they entertain nonetheless. Microtonal synth shards flay to and fro across a shifting foundation of quicksand beats that disappear before your eyes. Jackmate contributes an austere remix for “Wuorinen,” while “Live In Cascadia” is seven minutes of perfectly barmy techno. *Tomas*

JAKE FAIRLEY ANIMAL LOVE
Dumb Unit/GER/12
“Racoondog,” “Catsquirrel,” and “Fishduck”—these are your choices. Will we have genetically altered species to contend with in the near future? Fairley’s music doesn’t provide answers, just some dark, dirty, gutter-born techno beats. All three tracks stalk through twilight streets on rotting limbs, searching for easy prey. With Mr. Oizo-like subbass throbs and Kompakt-*esque* beat efficiency, those who embrace dread will love Fairley’s work. *Art Milan*

U-ROY & FRANÇOIS K ROOTSMAN
Deep Space Media/US/12
From the late 1960s to the present day, Jamaican DJ godfather U-Roy has advanced the art of MCing with clever lyrics and improv jazz-style delivery. Following a session at François K’s Deep Space club night, U-Roy tracked this excellent dub-techno recording. Fans of Rootsman, Mad Professor, and Burial Mix will enjoy the endless echoes and four/four steppers’ beats. *Tomas*

MISKATE/SANDALS & SOCKS MACROFUN VOL. 2
Microcosm/US/10
The minimal techno bug has infected Philadelphian and Foundsound label’s Miskate. Her track, “Daydreaming,” musically summarizes the

muddled feeling of drifting in and out of sleep on the bus, with sounds passing by your ears and the subtle bumps of the road. S&S’s “Lover” is an apt interpretation of the robotic, assembly line creation of a microchip—it’s all blips, bleeps, and conveyor-belt-steady drum machine rhythms. *Art Milan*

BASIC SOUL UNIT OCEANS EP
Left of the Dial/CAN/12
Carl Craig, Kirk Degiorgio, B-12, Stacey Pullen, and Kenny Larkin: these are the founding fathers of a particular style of ambient jazzy techno, the lush electronic sound of ‘92-’95. Toronto’s BSU (whose previous singles were championed by Jazzanova and Chateau Flight) revisits this classic motif, blending waltzing keyboard solos with waves of Arp and string-pad chords. Unlike most monotonous techno, BSU’s rhythms skip and skitter while traveling at bullet-train speeds. Back to the future indeed. *Tomas*

FABRICE LIG MY 4 STARS REMIXED
Kanzleramt/GER/12
Belgium’s Fabrice Lig gets the remix treatment by Ian O’Brian and Offshore Funk, and the result is an updated sound that’ll still please the purists. All the mixes are tight but it’s O’Brian who really shines, giving the track a lush, chopped-up jazzy feel complete with Detroit-esque strings, warm acidic melodies, and percussion that’d make Mad Mike happy. *TK*

GROOVE COUNSOUL & WOODY MCBRIDE PARAGRAPH ONE
Cannibal/US/12
Cannibal’s bold second release is a classic McBride ESP adventure through a thick, driving techno soundscape. Polyrhythmic drums lead us to a morphing synth drone that evolves throughout the mix as analog bass loops add a hypnotic and sensual touch. *Praxis*

HAL VARIAN CATALYSM EP
New Religion/UK/12
Appealing to your regressive tendencies, Delsin label head Marsel van der Wielen from the low country conveys a cold, taunting reality through sound on the Catalysm EP, which is similar in style to the music of his Peel Seamus moniker. Fans of labels like Headspace and Peacefrog will enjoy the dark rifts, subtle progressions, and airy smatterings of this sonic essay. *Scott Edmonds*

STEREOFUSE HEADFUNK
Phono Elements/GER/12
Thorsten Diegel and Martin Wörner display their affection for late night techno on this minimal single. Over a meaty kick foundation, bleepy percussive synth hits and a choir pad haze make for a deeply textured tune. Flip the disc for an acid-fused, bit-shifted club groove. *Praxis*

THE VOICES STREET COMMANDER
Plant/US/12
MAINLINE BLACK HONEY
Plant/US/12
The Voices mix up jangly guitars, melancholy vocals, and throbbing bass inna New Order stylee, then Stretch Armstrong gets all electro on a break-y remix that flirts with dancefloor abandon but never quite achieves it; check Munk’s drunken, hazy Hacienda mix of “Sure Thing” to get your rocks off instead. Meanwhile, Mainline channels the fuzzbox fantasia of Jesus & Mary Chain, then ropes in Romin and Who Made Who for stomping dance-rock reworks. *Star Eyes*



Released June 21st



Released July 12th



Released August 2nd

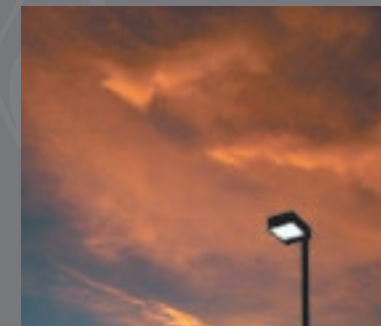
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HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS: JEROME SYDENHAM

People often speak of a “New York house” sound, but what they’re referring to is really an amalgamation of warm, rich-sounding music, including gospel, disco, Cuban *son*, African percussion, funk, and salsa. Perhaps no one embodies this uplifting fusion better than Jerome Sydenham. Born in Ibadan, Nigeria, raised in England, and schooled by the New York City streets, Sydenham’s background is as diverse and multi-textured as the music he produces with frequent collaborators Dennis Ferrer and Kerri Chandler. Since founding his label, Ibadan, in 1995, this former A&R man for East West records has remixed the back catalog of garage stalwarts Ten City, put out his own full-length (2001’s effusive *Saturday*), and started the 10” Beat offshoot, which purveys “Pan-African electro.” As Sydenham and Ferrer’s “Sandcastles” single continues to bust up the charts, we asked this worldly DJ what records are rocking his universe. *Saffron Reeves*
www.ibadanrecords.com

LAID PUNCH UP Symple Sound/US/12

“Punch Up” is the first release from Ben Johnson’s [Club Shelter, New York] new US imprint and it’s true to its title. This one’s pure protein and destined to do hard time in any DJ’s flight case. *Jerome Sydenham*

GLEN LEWIS FEAT. MJOJO & BONGANI LIFE EVERLASTING (PASSION OF THE C VOCAL MIX) Funk La Planet/US/12

Benjamin “A&R” Deffe has left us with a sultry soul vocal treat—yum! The percussion canters away with profound consistency and this fierce song leaves us more than satisfied. Go for the CV vocal mix and you’ll get my drift. (Non-soul lovers need not apply.) *Jerome Sydenham*

DENNIS FERRER CHURCH LADY Sferre/US/12

The sun seems to be shining on DJ/producer Dennis Ferrer. His next release on Sferre Records, “Church Lady,” is a gospel vocal track with such unique vocal arrangements and style that it’s going to cause nothing less than pandemonium on the dancefloor. Vocal fans, this one is not to be missed! *Jerome Sydenham*

GREENSKEEPERS MAN IN THE HOUSE Om/US/12

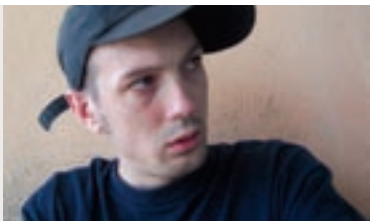
“Man In The House” might confuse some with its New Wave/rock (think The Cars or The Vapors) arrangement, but Greenskeepers and DJ Fluid mixes ensure the deep house contingent won’t riot. Lance DeSardi explores a moody synth version while Pepe Braddock’s take is disquietingly odd. Unusual, but worthy. *Hector Cedillo*

SIR PIERS & LOS AMIGOS INVISIBLES FEAT. SHAUN ESCOFFERY SHE’S GONE AWAY Curious/UK/12

I’d put singer Shaun Escoffery in the same universe as Donny Hathaway and Luther Vandross. His silky delivery can transform even a standard soul house number into a classic Shelter-worthy anthem. Not to say Sir Piers isn’t on his toes with uplifting keyboard work and production, and Los Amigos bring their ziny percussion solos and sexy disco backing vocals to the track. Nevertheless, the music revolves around the sun that is Escoffery’s emotive voice. *Tomas*

SCANDAL INC. THAT’S A GOOD LOOK Coco Machete/US/12

More nastiness comin’ atcha from the Coco camp with all the rump funk and sleaze one can hope for from a label that prides itself on being one step ahead of the posse. Straight-up jackin’ business here, with vocals by Venus, who tips her Kangol to Salt & Pepa. When you drop this ditty you better hope you’re wearing ho-repellant cause this shit is *pimp!* Sweet and vicious. *TK*



DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS: RAIDEN

Like the missile-heavy arcade game (and hardcore band) after which he’s named, UK producer Raiden makes relentless, dangerous drum & bass. Inspired by Jeff Mills, Joey Beltram, and oi bands, his smoldering techno12’s have reinvigorated the Renegade Hardware and Barcode labels, and he’s currently working with Dylan on some slammers for Freak Recordings. This summer, he’ll launch his own Offkey imprint with “Machine Soul,” a long-awaited collaboration with Southampton boys Propaganda. We tracked down the handlebar moustache-sporting Raiden in the middle of an inspiring Amsterdam spliff break and he told us what tracks are rocking from Israel to Japan. *Star Eyes*
www.tovmusic.com

PROCKET & ART PATHOS EL NIÑO Recon/UK/12

This has been my favorite tune for months now. Procket and Art Pathos are the next generation of Russian producers making waves in the scene and “El Niño” is one of their best tunes. Four bars into the drop, this tune goes insane with an almost buzz-saw techno riff that seems to swing from side to side. It’s totally unpredictable, yet still seems to roll. *Raiden*

VICIOUS CIRCLE VS UNIVERSAL PROJECT HELLRAZOR dub/UK/12

Universal Project does it again, this time with newcomers Vicious Circle in tow. Universal Project comes with their trademark militant, rolling sound that seems to constantly build, while Vicious Circle brings a more teched-out neuro funk sound. A great example of new school versus old school. *Raiden*

TECH ITCH HEX Penetration/UK/12

This is a nasty tune, but not in the usual Tech Itch way. A very simple tune consisting of a snappy break, a funky acid riff, and a block sub that smashes any club because the bass is simply huge, a lot like my mum. However, this tune is very naughty...unlike my mum. *Raiden*

NU:TONE 7 YEARS (MATRIX REMIX) Hospital/UK/12

Matrix gives the re-rub to Nu:Tone’s vocal driven “7 Years,” supplying his signature stretched out grooves throughout. Flip on over for the real gem, “Stay Strong,” with its infectious guitar distortion, high/low bass passes, and galloping drum rhythms. A pair of tunes perfect for the long summer days ahead. *Ryan Romana*

2DB PHAT BEAT Worldwide Audio/UK/12

Game recognize game, right? Thusly d&b heads know a pure roller when they hear it—and that’s just what 2dB gives the heads, proper raving music. Exploding like a mortar round only to lock, load, and repeat, the rattling drums and percussion of jump-up cut “Phat Beat” scatter about your ear drums, flipping through odd time signatures and surging rolls that accentuate the track’s hyper motion. A great jungle single with a soundwoy/b-boy attitude. *Big Ray*

DISTORTED MINDS & TC FEAT. MC FOXY FIRE IN THE HOLE DSR/UK/12

The latest from Distorted Minds’ MC Series sees the two producers link with MC Foxy for two militant tracks. “Fire” relies on dueling basslines and glass-shattering snares, while Foxy spits some “bun fire”-type incendiary vocals. All said, it’s a bit noisy and generic—nothing terribly original. Not so on TC’s “Revolution” remix, which bursts with fresh ideas—from its 4/4 opening to the time-stretched vox and stop/start amen rinse out. Throw in some

deft congas and an ambient breakdown and the B-side wins. *Tomas*

SILENT WITNESS & BREAK THE GENE POOL EP (PART 1 & 2) DNAudio/UK/2X12

DNAudio drops The Gene Pool EP with more redefined tech tumbling and speaker rumbling. “Block” finds Silent Witness & Break delivering fine slices of filth that grind over mechanical slumps and beat slapping bumps, while Klute joins Break on the Detroit techno roller “Cowpoke.” Part two gets grimmer with “Close to Zero,” and Break and Fierce round off this high class EP on the slippery “Singular.” *Ryan Romana*

LAROQUE THROW YOUR HANDS UP Wildstyle/UK/12

After successful tunes on Defunked, GLO, and Hospital, Laroque takes his mature production style—replete with flute riffs and sweet chords led by propulsive drum arrangements—to a higher level. “Throw Your Hands Up” is anthemic but not cheesy, and features a superb piano interlude that should cause some big-room pandemonium. Fans of atmospheric jazzy d&b of the 1996 Adam F/Peshay/J Majik variety should look to Laroque for similarly timeless music. *Tomas*

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HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: MARS BLACK

Omaha, Nebraska. No one ever thought it would become a mythical location until indie rock poster boy Conor Oberst and his genre-widening Saddle Creek label put it on the map. Now Oberst affiliate Mars Black is showing folks how Nebraskan hip-hop is done. His debut, *Folks Music* (Team Love), isn't quite emo rap, but it does share with the Saddle Creek bands a gloomy, brooding, and, most of all, honest outlook on life. Produced by fellow Angels With Dirty Faces crewmember E. Babbs, it's a dusty, crate-dug affair that often flirts with acoustic guitars and folk themes—no surprise, since Mars Black is a huge Bob Dylan fan. Though Black doesn't DJ, he's an avid fan of many types of music—and when we tracked down this self-taught tattoo artist he didn't shy away from giving us his opinion on the latest rap releases. *Vivian Host*
www.team-love.com

ALL-STAR FEAT. YOUNG JEEZY AND YO GOTTI GREY GOOSE white/US/12
It would seem crunk music has taken over the rap scene, and this crunk song is no different, which is exactly the problem. Even with the help of Young Jeezy and Yo Gotti, All-Star's four-minute vodka jingle is barely worth the money. *Mars Black*

COOL CALM PETE LOST Embedded/US/12
Pete lives up to his name with this cool, calm track laced with classic hip-hop flavor. I like the tone—it's reminiscent of Urban Thermo Dynamics—but this track still falls terribly short of anything that substantial. What's really sad is—like most hip-hop singles—the remix is the only thing that is worth a listen. *Mars Black*

THE PERCEPTIONISTS BLACK DIALOGUE Def Jux/US/12
This track is a throwback to the early '90s and sounds like the heyday of East New York rappers like Gangstarr, Group Home, and Blahzay Blahzay. The beat is definitely a head-nodder; unfortunately it's easy to ignore because the message is dated—the same thing listeners have heard from rappers for the last 10 years. *Mars Black*

LOER VELOCITY BREAK OUT Cajo Communications/US/12
Former Yonkers (now Bronx-based) lyricist Loer Velocity clearly loves the art of rhyming—a fact made obvious on this excellent three-track clear vinyl release. He earns the right to brag “*Man, my tongue's just poised, laidback and technical/definitely unlike the backpacking rest of you.*” On “Elegance” he rides a quiet storm beat to ill effect, while “Industry Standard” features Lifelong, Oktober, and Vast Aire—great to hear MCs doing it for the love. *Tomas*

MED PUSH Stones Throw/US/12
On the double-edged lead single off his solo debut, MED comes through with two certified heaters. The Dilla-produced A-side is a mid-tempo club joint, with rhymes aimed at the ladies atop freaky synth squiggles, while Madlib hooks up the flip “Can't Hold On,” lacing memory lane flows with chunky drums, throbbing bass, and vocal clips. Exceptional. *Brolin Winning*

MATHEMATICS JOHN 3:16 Nature Sounds/US/12
A teaser track from producer Math's new album *The Problem*, Wu-Tang's Method Man blesses the bouncy “John 3:16” with verses like “*We turn nightclubs into fight clubs/that's what happens when you invite thugs*” and “*Is it the fortune or fame that make y'all change?/Got Milton Bradley hatin' the game.*” “Spotlight” features a host of the Clan (Inspecta Deck, Masta Killa, etc.) over a dusty soul beat that sounds like a drunken bar band covering Al Green. Re-enter the *36 Chambers!* *Big Ray*

STARVING ARTISTS CREW DEDICATED Fat Beats/US/12
Hailing from Michigan, the SAC has been making moves since the late '90s, winning fans over with their upbeat lyricism and classic-style production. This single features two quality jams from their *Up Pops The SAC* album, plus the bonus instrumental “Newport Sunset.” Snapping breakbeats, soulful loops, and good-times rhymes dominate, making this ideal for fans of PUTS or Emanon. *Brolin Winning*

OHMEGA WATTS THAT SOUND Ubiquity/US/12
Down with the Lightheaded crew, Ohmega Watts is a producer to keep your eye on. Here he enlists lots of homies (The Procussions, Noelle, Manchild, Big Rec, Braille) to do their thing over a pair of irresistibly funky tracks. B-side “The Treatment” is also solid, but Quantic Soul Orchestra's neck-breaking remix of “That Sound” is guaranteed to get any party poppin'. *Brolin Winning*

THE HERBALIZER GENERALS Ninja Tune/UK/12
Herbalizer is a dope Brit production duo, but man, this song is a mess. Six MCs (with dubious names like Trap Clappa and Cheech Marina) are crammed on a four-minute track fluttering with '60s big band jazz samples. One MC, Daddy Mills, talks some generic gangsta prose irrespective of the song's theme, while 12-year-old rapette MacGuyver basically explains that she's 12, and raps. Not even Jean Grae's wordplay can save these generals from losing the battle. *Al Boogie*

CESAR COMANCHE UP AND DOWN ABB/US/12
A member of NC's Justus League, Cesar Comanche is known for his mellow wordplay and ear for quality beats. Having 9th Wonder in-house definitely helps, as the indie producer *du jour* hooks him up with some typically nice selections here. The Nicolay-produced “Jacob's Ladder” is *aight*, and the horn-fuelled bonus “Edited For T.V.” is loaded with choice '80s television references. *Brolin Winning*

GIANT PANDA SUPERFLY Tres/US/12
The five-man “black/white/Japanese” posse that is Giant Panda isn't waiting for Cold Crush to reform. Instead they're charting their own group-focused course in hip-hop by dropping lively singles like “Superfly,” which follows the internationally acclaimed “With It.” B-side “'90s” is a reminisce cut that laments the decade's darker moments and details hip-hop highlights of the “middle school.” Bear witness. *Tomas*

MR. COMPLEX CALM DOWN Raptivism/US/12
With guests like Dave One of De La Soul, Vast Aire, and production from DJ Spinna, this single has heat even before the record spins. Complex doesn't front on his name either, with dramatic vocal inflections, lyrics delivered in choppy half-stanzas, back-forth exchanges with Dave One on “Emotional”—you'll be shouting “*iliiiiiii!*” Fans of Da Beatminerz and Pete Rock will rock to instrumental tracks—as clean, heavy, and stomping as a new pair of Tims. “Calm Down” is the highlight; lyrically its moody, guard-rail NYC realness. Bravo Complex. *Big Ray*



2-STEP GUEST REVIEWS: YOUNGSTAR

Aquarians are known for being original, inventive, and independent, three traits that describe London garage producer Youngstar (born February 1, 1983) to a tee. In 2001, at the age of 18, the artist born Darryl Nurse broke onto the emerging grime scene with the massive “Pulse X”—produced mainly using Propellerheads ReBirth, the track sold a staggering 12,000 copies. Nurse followed things up with a label, DDJs Productions, which releases vocal tunes, riddim tracks, and lots and lots of bass-heavy 8-bar madness (check “Revival” and “Bodyrock”). And he keeps going from strength to strength, with remixes of Gemma Fox and Fya and his wicked backbeat for “Stand Up Tall,” the first single off Dizzee Rascal’s *Showtime* album. Youngstar says he’d like to “link up with artists overseas, get a bigger studio, get into making film music, and get [his] own clothing line,” maybe not in that order. We’ve no doubt this driven dude will do it—while we kick back and wait, here are some of his top records. *Star Eyes*

RUFF SQUAD UR LOVE FEELS white/UK/12

Ruff Squad have got some good beats, and I like the sample they use on “UR Love Feels.” This is a different kind of tune for the scene, and I’d like to hear someone rap or MC over this beat. I think most people prefer the flip side, “Pied Piper,” which is one of the best tunes I’ve heard using the square [bass] sound. *Youngstar*

WILEY COLDER Roll Deep/UK/12

I like listening to the beat on the flip, the Hydrant vocal mix of “Fire.” Wiley comes back with some strong, slewing lyrics. I’m not really feeling the A-side though—I’ve heard better stuff from Wiley, like that “What” remix. *Youngstar*

MOBB DEEP DO YOU REALLY white/US/12

“Do You Really?” is a fat tune produced by Clinton Sparks; you can catch it on the *Kill Yourself Pt. 1* mixtape from Sparks and Kay Slay. I’m really feeling the lyrics on this track, plus it’s got a nice beat and good sample. *Youngstar*

FIRE CAMP NO! (LETHAL B REMIX)

white/UK/12

LETHAL B FWD REMIX

Icon Dance/UK/12

Just when you thought it was safe, Lethal B is back with a remix of last year’s chart-topping FWD Riddim and Fire Camp’s infectious “No!” The FWD remix is hype in its own right and will get guaranteed airtime. The anthemic “No!” is a fists-in-the-air, shout-along song that begs for the rewind. It is immediately reminiscent of “Oil,” the song that first propelled Lethal B to grime stardom. *DeepSix*

ROLL DEEP CREW

IN AT THE DEEP END (ALBUM SAMPLER)

Relentless/UK/CD

Do grime icons Roll Deep have enough street credibility to get away with anything? As this sampler shows, either they do...or they *think* they do. While “When I’m ‘Ere” and even “Heat Up” (with its nursery rhyme lyrics) keep it respectably gully, other songs may have fans up in arms. The hook from The Maisonettes’ 1982 throw-back hit “Heartache Avenue” forms the basis for “The Avenue”—a Roll Deep stab at Jay-Z’s “Hard Knock Life”? Only time will tell if the crew has the staying power and commercial viability of Mr. Carter. *DeepSix*

ED209 THE INFECTIOUS REMIXES

Hardcore Beats/UK/12

Distortionz and Ills take on Ed209’s “Mentasm”—synth saturated “Infectious.” While the former crew leans on repetitive synth leads, Ills brings original programming to the table. With myriad melodic textures, panning acid sounds, and crisp, intelligent beats, Ills gives you something to listen or dance to. *Derek Grey*



FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS: GERD

From his outpost in Rotterdam, Holland, Gerd (born Gert-Jan Bijl) has been at the forefront of the future jazz scene since the early ‘90s. He’s released two albums, 1997’s *This Touch Is Greater Than Moods* (Universal Language) and 2001’s *High Wide & Wonderful* (Life Enhancing Audio), and a variety of remixes of the likes of Koop and Jazzinho. And just when it seemed this prolific DJ/producer couldn’t get any busier, he started 4lux Recordings, which has released killer records by Flowriders, Heavenly Social, and Phil Asher Presents Focus. In between keeping the vibe alive with his label and his radio show with production partner Paulo Delgado (check www.righton-fm.com), Gerd recently finished his new album; *Perspectives* (coming in September on LEA), features guest vocals from the likes of Vanessa Freeman and Guida De Palma. Sitting amidst a sea of new promos, we asked Gerd to pick some favorites for the summer months ahead. *Vivian Host*
www.4lux.com

MOODY ALLEN FEAT. VINCE FRANKLIN SIX FEET Flyin’ High/NETH/12

The MFP Collective has been releasing some of Holland’s finest broken beat and house tunes over the last two years or so. This time they hook up with MC Vince Franklin who delivers the goods with some deep lyrics and a great rhythmical flow. Check the DJ Honesty (from Slope/Sonar Kollektiv fame) remixes and the original is wicked too! *Gerd*

KAHIL EL ZABAR IN LIFE (IG CULTURE REMIX) Deeper Soul/US/12

Wicked spoken words over a rough and tough broken Afro track. The remix on this slab of vinyl comes from IG Culture, and what a brilliant job he’s done. It’s monotone, but dangerously infectious with its haunting bassline, cool church organ, and explosive percussion. You need this! *Gerd*

KID SUBLIME FEAT. NICK GUILARD SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR LOVE Rush Hour/NETH/12

Dutch fellow Kid Sublime hooks up with different vocalists such as Lil’ Melody and Lady Alma for his new album, which is soon to be released through Kindred Spirits. On offer here is a taster—a cool song featuring Heavy’s Nick Guilard. Check this out; it is indeed sublime! *Gerd*

STEPHAP HUNTAH FEAT. BLUE SMITH

SO ALIVE

Soultronik/FRA/12

Stephah Huntah’s previous single for Compost got broken heads nodding. These three new songs weave Rhodes-led jazz chords into complex rhythms. Like the soulful multi-layered work of Gerd, Alex Attias, and Kaidi Tatham, tracks like “So Alive” forge snippets of orchestral strings, live electric bass, congas, and Blue Smith’s tranquil vocals and compress them into a shimmering gem. “Elegancia” is pure Jazzanova-style fever—hot timbales and punchy beats galore. *Tomas*

FEIST GATEKEEPER (DO RIGHT REMIX)

Do Right/CAN/7

On this clear vinyl, limited-to-500-copies 7”, folk Canadian singer Feist (whose voice resembles Dani Siciliano or Smoke City’s Nina Miranda) gives us a taste of her Interscope debut LP *Let It Die*. Feist’s pretty, melancholy vocals sit well atop Do Right remixer Alister Johnson’s slinky broken beat rhythms. *Derek Grey*

MARCO DI MARCO FONTANA BLUE

Arison/UK/12

ANGA DIAZ A LOVE SUPREME

World Circuit/UK/12

Marco Di Marco enlists Irma Records’ LTJ Experience to give “Fontana Blue” a subtly charging jazz-house shuffle, led by a prominent contrabass lick. The youth Vipersquad opts for an introspective but engaging future bossa groove. Anga Diaz is a master *conguero* whose handwork recalls Ray Barretto or Poncho Sanchez. Diaz’s treatment of Coltrane’s “A

Love Supreme” features a scratch DJ, background singers, and 4hero-style strings that never obscure his percussion virtuosity. *Art Milan*

MAWGLEE THE OUT OF LUCK EP

Bastard Jazz/US/12

Brighton, UK’s Mawglee (Tru Thoughts) sees his mesmerizing downtempo jams reworked by New York’s Zeb and Austrians Ed Royal & Enne. Mawg’s original track “Sofa” blends psychedelic jazz samples with shuffling beats sure to please Peace Orchestra and Nightmares On Wax followers, while Zeb’s expert one-drop dub version is brilliant organic roots. A fantastic release. *Tomas*

KIDDA THE WORD BOOTY EP

Catskills/UK/12

ALDO VANUCCI DEAR DIARY

Catskills/UK/12

These singles solidify Catskills’ (home of breakthrough artists Husky Rescue) rep as the primary source for soul-drenched, pop-influenced downtempo sounds. While Kidda’s busy chopping up EW&F samples, Vanucci blends Donovan vox with Mr. Scruff beats, and toughens up “It’s On” with rapping from UK MC Blade. With more samples than a cheese shop on Saturday, both releases offer smile-inducing beats for ears graduating from Fatboy and Groove Armada into more stylish, fun-loving music. *Derek Grey*



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REGGAE REWIND BY ROSS HOGG

Trying to keep up with the voluminous output of the reggae world is like trying to drink from a firehose: while you'll definitely slake your thirst, you may also feel like you're missing most of the flow. But summer's almost here and that means reggae weather, so grab your hydrant wrench and join me for a drink.

Trojan's new four-disc box set *I Am The Upsetter: The Story of the Lee "Scratch" Perry Golden Years* accomplishes the daunting task of summing up a 10-year span (1968-1978) of one of reggae's most influential figures. It covers everything from Perry's early work with **Bob Marley**, **Junior Byles**, and **Dave Barker** to later projects with **Max Romeo**, **Junior Murvin**, and **Augustus Pablo**. If you're a fan of this period of Perry's work, you should also check for two new Southern California singles that do a superb job of carrying on the early Scratch sound: Rhygin Rockers' "Father Spider" (Rhygin Records) and King Terror's "Fuad Ramsey" (Axe).

Dancehall's massive roots revival is still in full swing, and there's no shortage of culture riddims in the recent arrivals bin. **Everton Blenders'** "Travelled The World" takes center stage on the **Travell** riddim (Explorer), while the Gibbo label (whose **Hard Times** riddim is still being juggled everywhere) recently dropped the **State of Emergency** riddim with **Jr. Reid** on the title tune. And roots rookie of the year candidate **I Wayne** is getting forwards with his new weed anthem "Sweet Collie" (Thriller); Bob Saunders turns in an interesting tune on the flip, a cover of **John Lennon's** "Woman."

Turning to bashment sounds, new kid 'pon di block **Busy Signal** is burnin' up the scene with "Born And Grow" (Stainless), a high-speed (and even higher energy) ode to *Jamdung*. It blends well with

other light speed riddims like the relentless **Jonkanoo** (Don Corleon) that backs **Beenie Man's** massive "Chakka Dance" and his "A Nuh Me," where he denies involvement in Bogle's murder. Diwali creator **Steven "Lenky" Marsden's** latest creation **Bubble Up** (40/40) features big tunes from **Sean Paul** and **Assassin**.

While the majority of bashment tracks maintain the uptempo trend, there are two new riddims that slow things down. On **Sleepy Dog** (Steely & Cleevie), Assassin keeps the energy high with double-time rhymes on "As A Man," and on the pounding **Scallawah** (THC Musik), Turbulence is set to bust big with his boom tune "Notorious."

But the craziest riddim in years has to be **My Swing** (Birch), produced by long-time **Shaggy** collaborator **Christopher "Longman" Birch**. My Swing is based on a romping Southern Baptist church organ that'll have you yelling "Amen!" (if you can stomach it in the first place). Not unlike **Germaican's** new **Messer Banzani** (which sounds like a follow-up to US3's "Tukka Yoot's Riddim"), **My Swing** is one that has to grow on you. I'll admit that I hated it until I heard **Elephant Man's** "Callin' Out," where he actually transforms into a preacher, if only for three minutes ("In the name of Jesus...mek a joyful noise!").



POP ON TRIAL BY SARA & MARIA

It's my turn to write this issue's Pop on Trial. I'm the one in the photo with the beehive and, unlike my partner Maria, I'm old enough to remember when having a New Wave past was just as embarrassing as playing in a band called Skabba the Hutt.

V.I.P. is no ordinary Philadelphia rap group. Formed in 2003, these former phone sex operators, punks, and DJs put a queer eye on an overwhelmingly straight white hipster scene—you know, the one where people frequently use the word "gay" as a "get out of P.C. jail free card" to cloak their homophobia (think *Vice* magazine). At the same time, V.I.P. offers an alternative to the stereotypical gym bunny, club-centric gay nightlife. Parties and controversy follow them wherever they go, and their debut EP, **Mad Coke** (Collision Collider), is no exception. *Mad Coke* takes cues (and coos) from Lil' Kim and Trina, bouncy beats from **L'trimm** and **JJ Fad** via tourmates Fannypack, and the freakazoid stance of Peaches and Har Mar Superstar. V.I.P.'s rhymes flow like rapid-fire girl gossip and as smooth as a cruise. While the recording doesn't represent the full live V.I.P. experience, as **Tom Tom Club** would say, it's fun, natural fun.

Speaking of fun, I was fortunate enough to catch **United State of Electronica** for the first time at an all-ages show at the Vera Project in Seattle; it ended with a conga line and half the audience onstage dancing. While '80s fetishism and post-punk inspired dance-rock has been done to death, U.S.E. brings a sense of vibrancy, energy, and pure love to the movement on their *Live and Direct From the Emerald*

City EP (Sonic Boom Recordings) that includes two live tracks and two **RK47** remixes.

When you think New York rock bands, **Palomar** rarely makes the top of most people's lists, which is their loss. On their past three albums, the co-ed quartet has mastered a formula of peppy indie pop à la **Heavenly** and early '80s predecessors like **Girls at Their Best** and **The Shop Assistants**. Palomar's *3.5 Demo EP*, an emusic.com exclusive, is rougher around the edges, but still as powerful and bitersweet as ever. The sweet harmonies of Rachel Warren, Christina Prostrano, and Sarah Brockett weave an intricate web, buoyed by the jaunty rhythms of Dale Miller.

Here's hoping that **Mobius Band** is this year's **Postal Service**. On *City Vs. Country* (Ghostly International), the Brooklyn-by-way of rural-Massachusetts trio translates loss and longing (both personal and political) into heartbreak beats, electronic squiggles, and guitars that heave and sigh.

Allison Wolfe—the go-go dancing, cat's eyeglasses-wearing frontwoman for Bratmobile and **Cold Cold Hearts**—has a new band, **Partylite**. Their EP, *Girls With Glasses* (Retard Disco), is still leading the revolution for the freaks and geeks of the world with a sense of humor, and perhaps the only love song written to **Ralph Nader**. When Wolfe sings "I don't wanna fight no more," she still is, with an irrepressible smile.



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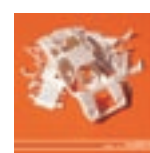
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LUCKY 13
BY TOPH ONE

Henry Rollins used to sing a song called "This is Good." These things are good: brunch at BlueJay Café on Divisadero, a slice and a beer at Lanesplitter in Berkeley, a family barbeque on a shady Alameda street. It's dancing to "I Left My Heart" on the right field arcade after the Giants take a home game or "San Francisco" at 5:15 a.m. at Lotta's Fountain, commemorating the 99th anniversary of the 1906 earthquake and fire. Bikes are most definitely good—bomping Twin Peaks at 4 a.m., a lazy Tiburon Loop and a ferry ride home, swerving down 16th Street on a Saturday night, being a menace to sobriety... Warm spring mornings that slide into cool, foggy summer evenings—that's the Yay Area and these things are good...

1. SHAG NASTY & DJ PAUSE MONSTER (Illiact/US/CD) DJ Pause unleashes his full arsenal of electro-laced ghetto funk for partner Shag Nasty and a gang of homies including San Quinn, Equipto, and Andre Nickatina to spit their tales of SF street life upon. This one's for Honey Bunch.

2. MAWGLEE THE OUT OF LUCK EP (Bastard Jazz/US/12EP) Brooklyn keeps it poppin' with the jazzfunk freakouts—this time by way of Brighton's Mawglee and a fly remix from Austria's Ed Royal & Enne, all full of congas and Rhodes and outdoor vibes. Take it to the rooftop!

3. 75 DEGREES THE LAST GREAT HIP HOP ALBUM (Dining Room/US/CD) Straight, unapologetic Bay Funk in its rawest, dirtiest form. These cats fly the flag high, and loud, and proudly. Check Marc Stretch from Foreign Legion on "Fly High."

4. MOPHONO I CRY (CB/US/12EP) My man DJ Centipede (a.k.a. Mophono) has been holding it down for years with impeccable DJs skills and a wide variety of breaks to make you move and make ya' think. On his vinyl debut, dude reworks his popular "I Cry" track into nine distinct versions—often melancholy, but equally uplifting as with "Tears" or "Version #6." Lovely.

5. THE PACIFICS SUNDAY'S CHICKEN (All Natural/US/CD) OK, I'm a Chicagophile. I admit it! Is that so wrong? ToneB's All Natural label has yet to put out an unworthy release, and this sophomore album from The Pacifics is a perfect example of new school cats flexing their skills while nodding respectfully at those who paved the way. My joint is "Nobody"... "don't need a bottle of Cris, just need a bottle of Crown..."

6. DJ M3 "TRAGIC QUEEN" (Green Gorilla/US/12) Yo—the M3 version is a disco-house stomper with enough guitar roughness to make me happy, but it's been awhile since I've felt inspired to do the Albatross. Flip that Q-Burn's Mix on 33 and you'll be geeking the Bird in no time flat.

7. PRINCE PAUL INSTRUMENTAL (Female Fun/US/2xLP, CD) What? Did you think Prince Paul would ever put out a *non*-dope record? Of course this is killer! Female Fun rules by the way. Look for other new releases by DJ Spinna and Ge-o-logy.

8. KID GUSTO 4-TRACK SAMPLER (True Grooves/US/12EP) This may be the "Afro-Heat #1" of summer '05 right here. Both "Basscomb Express" and "Holy Brown" build slowly into full-on Afro/go-go/hip-hop bonfires capable of destroying all dancefloors.

9. BLACK MAMA, WHITE MAMA "HELL AWAITS... IF YOU'RE MEAN" (Zen Pig Dinnermint/US/12) High weirdness in its rawest, most bad-ass form. On 45, it's like P.i.L. meets 2 Lone Swordsman; on 33, it's Loop meets KLF and goes hunting for witches alone in the woods.

10. STRANGER OVER HER UNDER EP (Grayhound/US/12EP) Ideally, one would be listening to this under the noonday sun, eating grapes and thinking about sex. "Under Beat" is my jammy jam. Get yourself a hammock and make it happen.

11. ? REMIXES (GSD/US/12EP) Lower Haight Playas meet the Sexicans and all sorts of illicit remixing goes down. A sweet house mix of Snoop's "Groupie Luv," but my joint is the Sexican's electro-funk take on Big Gipp's "We Servin Em." Ready for battle!

12. MC UNITE "SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL" (Hands On/US/12) Imagine Biz Markie was a white dude from San Diego and Paul Nice produced his beats. Well, this is Unite and DJ MyxIplex, and it'll rock your party.

LUCKY 13) BRIAN COLEMAN RAKIM TOLD ME (Wax Facts Press/ US/book) Oh darn, why doesn't someone interview my favorite hip-hop artists of all time and get them to talk about making the classic albums of the '80s? Why not get De La Soul, Too \$hort, Public Enemy, Schooly-D, KRS One, and about a dozen others involved? Boy, that would really suck. (*Not.*) Get it here: www.waxfacts.com.

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at www.fabric8.com/redwine. Hear him every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in SF.



DJ M3



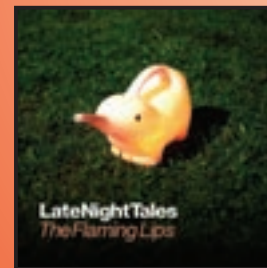
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Summertime Grooves from Studio Distribution



The Flaming Lips
LATE NIGHT TALES

Compiled by The Flaming Lips, LateNightTales features tunes by Radiohead, Aphex Twin, Bjork, 10cc, Brain Eno, Miles Davis plus many more. Also includes The Flaming Lips' highly celebrated version of The White Stripes' "Seven Nation Army" as an exclusive track.



Tosca
J.A.C.

Tosca's fourth artist album, J.A.C., is the most consistent formulation of both the carefree and the melancholic aspects of Tosca. The melodies quicken, the grooves are both fun loving and laidback. Huber and Dorfmeister have found both a fresh understanding of the art of understatement and a newly reformulated, breathtaking musical authenticity.



Hawke
LOVE WON ANOTHER

The latest musical adventure from legendary producer Gavin Hardkiss. 12 emotionally electric Hardkiss-flavored songs.



Roy Ayers
VIRGIN UBIQUITY

Roy Ayers is back with Virgin Ubiquity II, a second albums' worth of previously unreleased gems. VUII is collection of new found funky grooves that will undoubtedly appeal equally to hip-hoppers, soul lovers, jazz freaks, young, and old.



The Funky Lowlives
SOMEWHERE ELSE IS HERE

The long-awaited second album from UK downtempo masters The Funky Lowlives. Striking a chord with fans of Air, Zero7 and Massive Attack, Somewhere Else Is Here gets better with every listen.



Berkeley - 2455 Telegraph Ave
San Francisco - 1855 Haight St.
Hollywood - 6400 Sunset Blvd.



IN THE STUDIO MADLIB

CALL HIM LORD QUAS, YNQ OR DUDLEY PERKINS—NO MATTER THE NAME, MADLIB IS A MODERN PRODUCTION MAVERICK. WORDS: JESSE TERRY PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK

Arguably the most prolific producer working today, Madlib has amassed a devoted international following thanks to his smoky soundscapes and fearless innovation. Over the last 12 years, he's been heard on well over 100 records, including forays into jazz, reggae, and broken-beat. On his latest endeavor, *The Further Adventures Of Lord Quas*, he reconnects with his homie from the Lost Gates, crafting another classic Quasimoto LP chock-full of charismatic beats and eccentric humor. We recently caught up with the renowned loop digger to gain some insight into his studio shenanigans, upcoming solo album, and the never-ending list of new projects on tap.

LET'S TAKE IT BACK TO THE BEGINNING. DID YOU PLAY ANY INSTRUMENTS AS A KID, OR DID YOU START WITH DJING AND MAKING BEATS?

I was taking my pops' records at a young age, turntables and stuff. I didn't mess with instruments until a year before Yesterdays New Quintet came out. I started making beats in like '83, just messing around DJing.

DID YOU START OUT DOING PAUSE TAPES?

That's kinda how I make my beats now. I like my beats raw, sloppy. Other shit is all robotic; I like mine to have a little human quality to it.

WHEN YOU'RE IN THE STUDIO, WHAT ARE YOUR KEY PIECES OF GEAR, THE STUFF YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT?

Records, records, records. A couple drum machines, keyboards or something. Turntables. I got a MPC 4000, SP-1200, [Roland SP] 606, [Boss SP] 303. I'm usually using the 303 though. It's just convenient; I can make a beat in like five minutes, like freestyling. Open mind, just freestyle that shit.

THE FIRST QUAS ALBUM MADE A LOT OF NOISE, AS DID THE BLUE NOTE PROJECT, AND THE MADVILLAIN RECORD WAS HUGE. DID YOU FEEL A LOT OF PRESSURE WITH THIS NEW ALBUM, LIKE YOU GOTTA MAKE IT BETTER THAN EVERYTHING ELSE?

Nah, I don't really do that. I just try to come from the heart. I ain't really trying to do what somebody tells me—I'm just trying to make music that I wanna hear, and people that are like-minded wanna hear. I can't really be worried about what somebody's thinking. I'm trying to come with my experience, making good music that appeals to me first, and then I can put it out.

SO MANY OF THE TRACKS ON THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF LORD QUAS ARE REALLY SHORT, BUT VERY DENSE AND OVERFLOWING WITH DIFFERENT STUFF. IS THAT A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO KEEP THINGS MOVING, OR ARE YOU JUST INTO MAKING TRACKS SHORT AND SWEET?

Yeah, I look at that shit as soundpieces, like movie scenes. Straight to the point and then it's off to the next. I ain't sittin there for 10 minutes.

WILL QUAS BE DOING ANY SHOWS OR A TOUR? HOW DO YOU WORK THAT OUT IN A LIVE SETTING?

Yeah, we gonna figure that out. It's gonna be crazy though. Gonna be like some Kraftwerk shit—I'll be drinkin a drink with you watching the show (laughs).

WHAT'S UP WITH THE MADLIB SOLO ALBUM?

It's another invasion. It's all rappin, people from the crew in there, couple unknown names, a couple Dilla tracks, couple Oh No tracks.

DOES IT HAVE A TITLE YET?

King Of The Wig Flip. I ain't no king, it's just a good title.

MF DOOM AND GHOSTFACE ARE DOING A PROJECT TOGETHER. WILL YOU BE INVOLVED WITH THAT AT ALL?

That's gonna be sick right there. I'm collaborating with Vanilla Ice, Mr. T, and Hammer.

WHO ELSE ARE YOU DOING BEATS FOR?

I don't think the stuff with Common came out 'cos he got in touch with Kanyezy. I did some stuff with Busta Rhymes; I did some stuff with De La, Talib Kweli, couple people... it's a secret. 'Lotta shit coming out, but check out this Quasimoto first.

ANY LAST WORDS FOR THE READERS?

Thanks for listening. Thanks to the fans. Y'all got some big ass ears listening to my shit, for real.

Quasimoto's *The Further Adventures Of Lord Quas* (Stones Throw) is in stores now. Upcoming Madlib projects include new albums from MED, Percee P, Dudley Perkins, Madvillain, Jaylib, a Stones Throw comp, and the BBE *Beat Generation* record. www.stonesthrow.com



In Madlib's studio (clockwise from left): Akai MPC 4000, E-mu SP-1200, and Boss SP-303



"I CAN MAKE A BEAT IN LIKE FIVE MINUTES, LIKE FREESTYLING. OPEN MIND, JUST FREESTYLE THAT SHIT."

KING BRITT AND MOTOROLA E SERIES PHONES

WWW.MOTOROLA.COM, WWW.KINGBRITT.NET

Unfortunately for people who prefer form over function, the days of brick-sized cell phones are long gone. With Motorola's new E-Series cell phones, everyone else is spoiled rotten. Want to play videogames, access your office, listen to MP3s, take photos, or watch videos? No problem. To make things that much sweeter, Motorola has enlisted artists like King Britt for quality content.

"Because I was part of the M3 event in Miami, they asked if I had any sort of video or songs to include on their phone," explains Britt. "We actually just did a video for a project called the Nova Dream Sequence. They loved it, and they put it on their phone."

The new Motorola line has a range of features for a wide variety of users. Count on screens big enough to watch your favorite media, with storage on a removable flash chip. With storage space decreasing in size, don't be surprised to see these tiny phones holding multiple gigabytes in the near future. In addition to storing MP3s, photos, and video, you can also buy music directly from your phone. Imagine needing a track for your next DJ gig: simply download it onto your phone, Bluetooth it to your laptop, and pop it into Final Scratch for instant gratification.

The benefits are just as great for the average user. As phones, MP3 players, and cameras get smaller and smaller, it was only a matter of time until someone combined them all into one unit.

"I'm excited," quips Britt about the future of handheld. "You're going to be able to watch *Star Wars* on it!" *Jesse Terry*

King Britt has been busy remixing (among others) African-American folk painter Sister Gertrude, The O'Jays, Everything But The Girl, War, and Edwin Starr.



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ADS TECHNOLOGIES INSTANT MUSIC RDX150 AUDIO CONVERSION

MSRP: \$59.95, WWW.ADSTECH.COM

What's the sound of one hand ripping? The **RDX150** let me find out after a nasty skateboarding spill took my right paw out of action. I was able to keep archiving my precious vinyl collection during my time off from work with this handy USB interface, which includes Nero music management, and CD burning software. It may not be as crisp sounding or as loud as when I run the signal through my \$400 sound card, but for a street price of around \$60, you can't really complain. Plus, the Nero-Mix software is so easy, my left hand never even had time to feel awkward. There are algorithms galore for cleaning up clicks and pops, but if you actually enjoy those sounds on your cold-hearted digital device (like me) then just let nature take its course. Note: phono pre-amp required! If you don't know what that means, should you really be reading this magazine? *Ryan Sommer*



NATIVE INSTRUMENTS KONTAKT 2 SAMPLER

MSRP: \$579, WWW.NATIVE-INSTRUMENTS.COM

While waiting for **Kontakt 2** to tell me installation was successful, I experienced the familiar, giddy dread I always get with a new toy. I'm excited by the new possibilities. I'm also dreadful of how long it will take to get it working my way, or at all, without calling the company and waiting on hold for half a day. This time, I skipped the directions, launched the application, and had Kontakt punching a kick drum out of my home stereo in seconds. I skimmed the short but comprehensive manual and not long after that my Oxygen-8 was triggering multiple samples (of any format) through my monitors and adding crazy manipulations, surround sound, and spatial fractalization at will. Thankfully, the German minimalists at Native Instruments provide some serious bonuses with the package: a virtual rack of detailed EQs, a 15 GB sound library, modulation, envelope, phaser, distortion, and compression. You can also tweak the speed independently of the pitch. But even more thankfully, they provide only the basics, and leave custom scripting to you—if you want it. *Marc Kate*

QUICKIE, MAGIX RINGTONE MAKER

MSRP: \$19.95, WWW.MAGIX.COM

The coolest ringtones I've heard recently include Wu-Tang's "C.R.E.A.M." and Herbie Hancock's "Rockit." I rock vibrate most of the time myself—I like how it feels funny in my pants; but if I were to move to the land of custom ringtones, I certainly wouldn't pay for one online. I'd buy the **Magix Ringtone Maker** for 20 bucks and feel confident that I could turn any sound, track, or recording I wanted into a ringtone. *Jesse Terry*

Pros: Connects with Infrared, Bluetooth or USB. Supports many file formats.

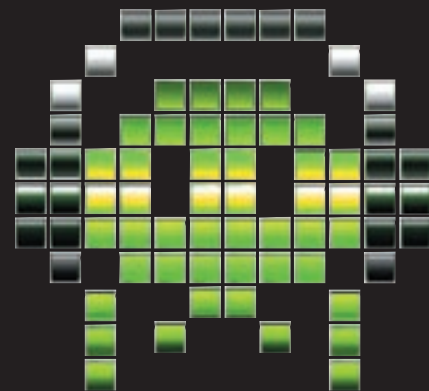
Cons: PC only



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OZ MUSIC CODE ALPHABET SOUP

MSRP: \$59.95; WWW.OZMUSICCODE.COM

It may look and play like a Fisher-Price toy, but that's no dismissal. **Alphabet Soup** lets you drag-and-drop wav, aiff, snd or mp3 files into its browser and play them back on your QWERTY (normal computer) keyboard. You can process with Audio Unit effects and control via MIDI, but that's about as complex as the process gets. Because Alphabet Soup can play mp3s, I committed it to its most obvious purpose: I made a Lady Sovereign/Underoath mash-up that you can be assured will never be available on Limewire. Though Alphabet Soup is far from being an audio production workhorse, its simplicity makes it a perfect quick-and-dirty sketchpad before starting up your MPC. Who knows? Maybe it will inspire your five-year-old daughter to become the next Diplo. *Marc Kate*



BOWERS & WILKINS SPEAKERS

M1 MSRP: \$200, PV1 MSRP: \$1500, WWW.BWSPEAKERS.COM

Unless you're a gearhound and pride yourself on how much technology intrudes on your life, you want your electronics to hide in the background as much as possible—or at least look slightly cool without attracting too much attention. To this end, Bowers & Wilkins designed the **M-1 Satellite Speaker** to be a discrete object that produces greater sound than you might expect from such a compact box. As a stereo pair, the M-1s produce a bright, clear sound. When used as they were intended, in a mini-theatre quintet with their close friend the **PV1 subwoofer**, they really come into their own. They envelop you in as much force and clarity as you'd want a home theatre to produce. The PV1 also looks like a jet engine. How appropriate. *Marc Kate*



QUICKIE: SAMSON C01U MICROPHONE

MSRP: \$79; WWW.SAMSONTECH.COM

For producers on a budget thinking about recording vocals in their apartment's shower stall, reasonably priced home studio mics have finally caught up with the market. Joining M-Audio's affordable/portable Pulsar, the **Samson C01U** takes the pro-audio company's great condenser mic technology, and adds the plug and play simplicity of USB. Use it sans interface boxes or computer pre-amps—just plug-in, and start recording. The C01U features a 19mm internal shock mounted diaphragm with a cardioid pick up pattern that enables spotless recording quality. *Jesse Terry*

Pros: Plugs in directly to any computer with a USB input. Large 19mm diaphragm. Smooth, flat frequency response. USB connection cable included.

Cons: Bad homemade demos just encourage the *American Idol* phenomena.

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MONEGROS

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MACKIE C4 CONTROLLER

MSRP: \$1299, WWW.MACKIE.COM

By this point, everyone is in love with their computer studios, but sick of typing and using their mouse. Mackie has come up with a solution for musophobes with their **C4 controller**, which features more knobs than an English footie match. Each dial features a small light to show your level, depth or whatever you have set up. Best of all, the C4 features total recall, so each time you switch from song to song, it remembers previous settings. It's already deeply compatible with Apple's Logic Pro and Sonar 4, with more software companies getting in line to collaborate soon. Unlike other controllers, the C4 links up with your computer and displays various parameters via small LCD displays on the unit itself—a great benefit for glassy-eyed computer musicians fond of late-night sessions. *Jesse Terry*



APPLE LOGIC EXPRESS 7.1

MSRP \$299, WWW.APPLE.COM

Ready to step up from GarageBand but not ready to drop next month's rent on Logic Pro? **Logic Express 7.1** is your move. While you can work with existing GarageBand songs, Express is a major upgrade in power, options, and (not surprisingly) complexity. Express 7 boasts a robust environment limited primarily by your skills and ambitions. Choose from over 1,000 Apple Loops (or make your own with Loop Utility), 27 software instrument plug-ins, and up to 12 audio input channels with 24-bit/ 96kHz resolution. Tweak the sound with 40 effects plug-ins, geek out on a solid FM synthesizer, or devour hours with minute adjustments to a decent approximation of analog synthesis. Unless you already have a few years of production under your belt or money isn't an issue, it would be hard to justify the extra \$700 for Logic Pro. Express will turn you into an obsessed, music-making hermit just fine. *Peter Nicholson*

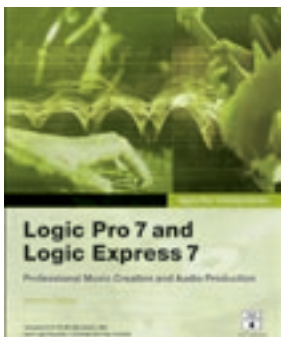
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VIS-ED: WK INTERACT

From the cliffs of southern France to the grit of downtown New York, this wheatpaste revolutionary pushes forward a different kind of motion graphics.

WORDS: MARK PYTLIK IMAGES: WK INTERACT



ABOVE: WK's arsenal
RIGHT: Exclusive piece for
XLR8R Vis-Ed, 2005

Growing up in the tiny hilltop village of Saint-Paul de Vence in Southern France meant that WK Interact (he prefers not to give out his real name) spent his formative years surrounded by the work of giants like Picasso, Matisse, and Surrealist sculptor Alberto Giacometti, all of whom spent time in the Provence region. While the aspiring artist enjoyed the obvious benefits of such a fertile artistic environment, it wasn't long before he realized that his own work needed to come from somewhere else entirely. Eager to tease out a personal aesthetic that looked to everything from photography and film to storyboarding and interior design, it wasn't long before Interact relocated to New York.

That was 15 years ago. These days, the 38-year old enjoys a modest profile as the talent behind a bloody-minded body of work that includes posters, indoor art installations and, perhaps most notably, a sequence of arresting, larger-than-life street pieces. Done in a highly detailed, monochromatic, ink splattered style, Interact's sometimes gargantuan pieces don't merely occupy

their spaces, they *cling* to them. Rather than stay confined to 2D wallspace, Interact's pieces zoom across corners or sidewalks or newspaper stands. With an emphasis on movement and physicality, the often blurry pieces communicate kinesis and sometimes even violence—two elements he considers core components of life in New York City.

Much like his work, the artist himself is perpetually in motion. When we catch him on the phone early one April morning, he's verbally sketching out plans for exhibits and projects in Puerto Rico, Hong Kong, and Italy and making mention of a book he's aiming to release by the end of the summer. Factor in the upkeep of Interact's own gallery space (the Lower East Side's Studio 101), and it's easy to see how his frantic pieces are just a logical extension of his own torrid pace.

www.wkinteract.com





Tell me a little bit about your background and how your art brought you to New York.

I really wanted to do something where you had that sense of motion and speed going on around you. When I was in France, I did that concept for eight different billboards but I didn't really like the frame—it felt too static. Then I redid the project in a smaller size on paper and put the papers in the street; unfortunately [the city would] clean, so over the next few days everything would be gone. Those pieces used to take a month to paint!

Because of the work I was doing, I decided New York was the best city to be in. I came here for a few months in 1990. I didn't really speak English, so things were difficult, but I fell in love with the city and decided to stay. I struggled for a year and a half, working at a really tough job. I used to live in a village where it was easy to work where people would see you, but New York was so gigantic. So that's when I changed and upgraded my format to actually fit the city and I started to do [big] walls.

What is it about speed and motion that keeps you coming back to it and using it as the basis for your work?

I really like trying to find a perfect motion for each different part of the human body. It's not before the motion's going to start or when you actually see an impact, it's right between that. The motion expresses the physical emotion of the people looking at it—it's interacting with the street and how people are going to see it. It's so complex that it becomes very important for me to choose the right location. The location gives me the subject, the concept, and from that I create the motion—something that could happen at that corner.

You also seem to be preoccupied with armament and weaponry.

It's because of the uniform and the practical aesthetics of it. It's minimalist and kind of futuristic. But I don't carry anything...Some people really believe my place is full of weapons! I did this one exhibit in 2002 called *Rescue*—it was a military, anti-terrorist theme and I did it because of 9/11. For me, it was what I could see the city looking like in 2018 or 2020...

I'm not for war. I like peace and everything, but when people call me to do an anti-war t-shirt, I tell them 'You're going to make \$25,000 on this t-shirt. If you want me to do something, I can, but I don't need to create a design for you; it's never gonna change anything.'

Do you see a lot of people trying to capitalize on the anti-war movement?

If I really wanted to be successful right now, I could just take one of my projects—[like] this one poster with a guy twisting someone else's head—and just replace the heads with Bush and Mickey

Mouse and people would buy it. But that's not what I want to go for.

Can you elaborate a little bit on your name?

The two letters, 'WK', don't mean anything. They're not my initials, but I do like the design of the letters. Later I added my own fingerprint, because I believed that in the future you wouldn't have to sign anything, you'd just put your fingerprint on a door and it would unlock it. I like all that kind of futuristic stuff.

The 'Interact' is because I had a show at this fashionable place called Colette in Paris once and I needed a title. It was one of my first projects being shown inside, and I liked the sound of 'WK Interact at Colette'—it felt more like an action.

Could you do this kind of work in Europe?

I create a very cold, visceral, and strong image, and it works because it's from New York. Instead of recreating where I've come from, I've adapted and sucked up the whole culture of New York. I have a ton of other images, very French things, that if I were to be put on the street, they'd arrest me right away. But if I put something strong, violent, and powerful, people understand. I did some stuff in Paris that was totally different—it was a butterfly woman masturbating. There was no violence—it was completely erotic, and it looks great in Paris and Italy. But where could I put that in New York?

What goes on at your storefront, Studio 101?

It's very much like my studio—sometimes you see me and sometimes you don't, but it's like an open window. There's no signs, it's not in the yellow pages, I don't spend money on fashion editorial, but if people pay attention and feel like coming in, they can.

You've done a lot of work for corporations and brands. What's your selection process?

I'm known for turning people down—that doesn't give me a great image. They think I think I'm a bigshot or whatever, but I'm just very careful. Some of these brands can come in and [ruin] the design. They can kill you—you could be successful for three months but then never work again for three years. You have to understand the power of it. If you only have one style and it takes you such a long time to create that, you become a product.



LEFT PAGE:
"Headcheck" and "Rising Bycke"

THIS PAGE:
"WK Bycke," "Kite Cycle Spray Can," "Untitled"



NEGATIVLAND

NORCAL AUDIO PIRATES CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF GENIUS AUDIO ART COLLAGE.

WORDS: BEN BUSH IMAGE: DAN LYNCH

Negativland has always had a penchant for the kind of toilet humor that would make Duchamp proud. Their latest album *No Business* comes complete with a bright yellow whoopee cushion emblazoned with the copyright symbol. As the Supreme Court hears the case of music industry behemoth Sony against file-sharing programs like Grokster, it looks like, 25 years into their career, Negativland is still 25 years ahead of the curve—the murky ethics of found sound appropriation they have explored through electronic music and social satire couldn't be more current. *No Business* contains collaged samples of Ethel Mermen, Disneyland rides, and a melodramatic Grammy awards speech by the president of the RIAA on the evils of downloading music.

"*No Business* is a big fancy package with a lot of stuff in it," says band member Don Joyce. "That's our personal strategy to coexist with downloading, making the album into a multimedia package, offering more than you can get online." Although the album comes in a box resembling novelty itching powder, inside its gag exterior is a booklet of academic treatises on file-sharing, which the band wrote for a conference on the public domain at

Duke University Law. It's a gleefully anarchic Book of Revelations for the recording industry, describing how if the industry doesn't find a way to accommodate downloading it may just collapse... and maybe that's fine. The death of corporate labels is not the same as the death of music, explains Joyce. "The notion that one could run a business or have a career based on selling thousand of pieces of plastic coated in aluminum is a fairly new one in history and it's not written in stone."

Back in 1991, Negativland took a bullet for the younger generation of found sound musicians they have inspired. Island Records sued the band after they took samples of U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" and pasted them together with outtakes of Kasey Kasem cursing about the stupidity of the adopted names of the Irish quartet's band members. Negativland lost more money in the case than they had made in their entire history as a band.

The band's greatest contribution to the turntablists and knob twiddlers may be its involvement with Creative Commons, a non-profit organization that has created an alternative to copyright. "They asked us what we wanted copyright to do," says Joyce. "It's

a way to unilaterally update copyright as it should be." A wide variety of artists have registered their work under this license, which allows their works to be cut up and collaged by other artists. Copyright law contains a clause allowing the use of elements of copyrighted works for parody or critical comment. Negativland's central argument is that there ought to be a similar Fair Use provision for collage, which would differentiate bootlegging from artistry.

Sampling lawsuits are waning, as record labels and the RIAA focus their attention on suing everyone who might be bleeding their profits, from music hungry college students to the tech savvy elderly. Joyce cites the history of the blank tape tax. When blank tapes first came into production the record industry saw the sky falling, and lobbied for a tax on every blank tape sold. The proceeds would then be divvied up among the major labels. A similar brouhaha occurred over the arrival of the VCR, another technology that has come and gone with the entertainment industry still intact. "It's like these people never learn," Joyce says. "It may very well be the same thing with the Internet."

www.negativland.com

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